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Dance and Dancers

JUNE 1958

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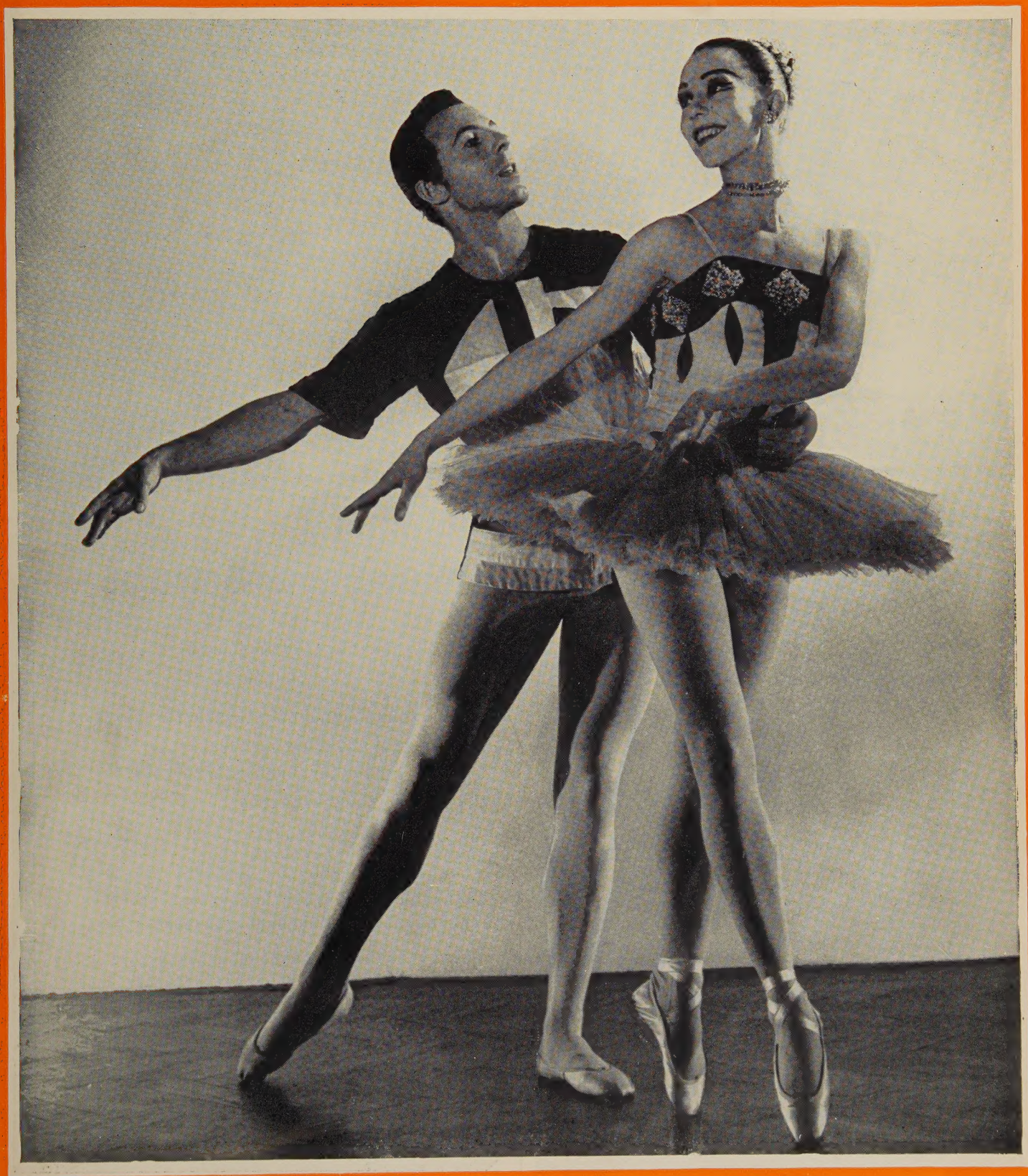

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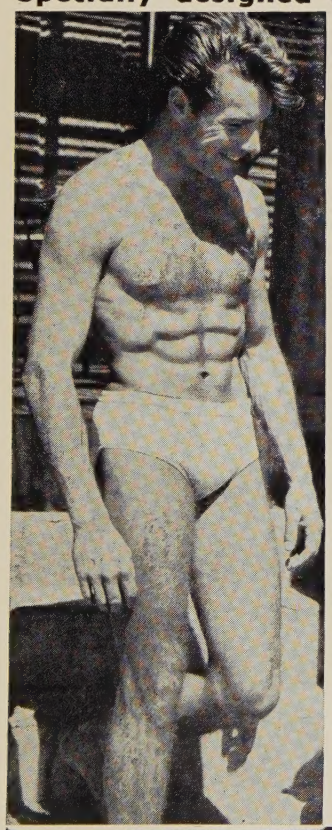

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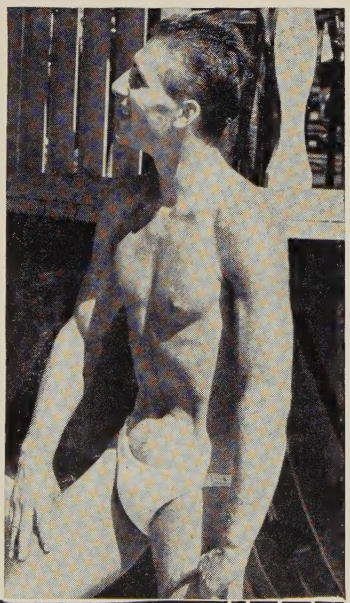

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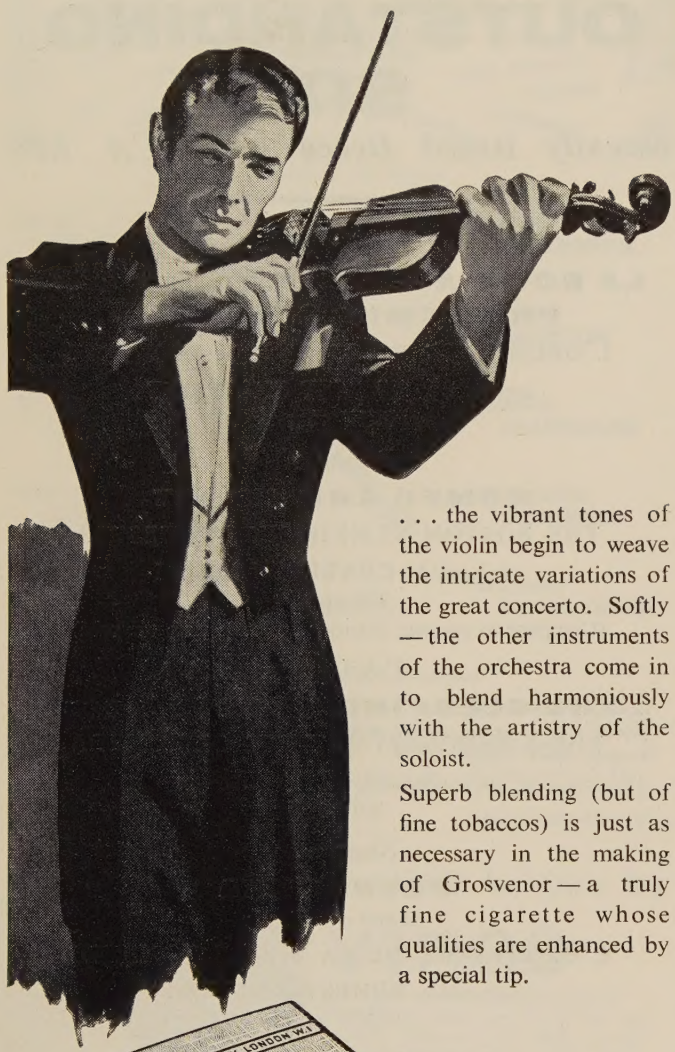

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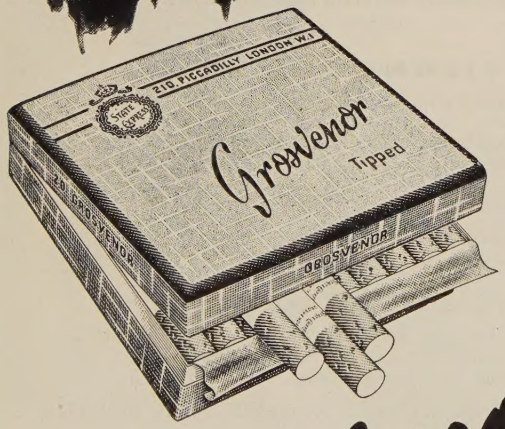

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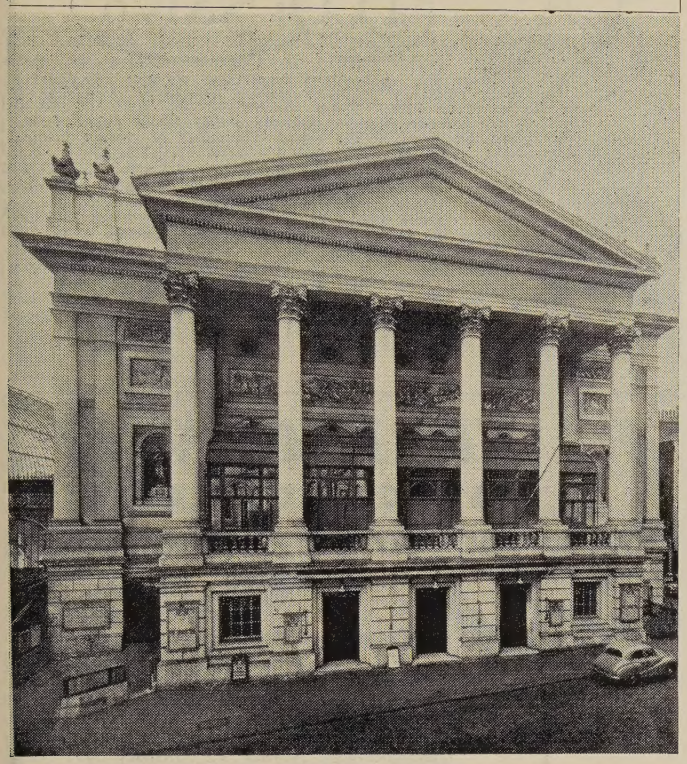

The ROYAL OPERA HOUSE, COVENT GARDEN

TO be told that the Royal Opera House was 100 years old on May 15 almost certainly evokes a sense of disbelief — only 100, surely it is far, far older than that! And in a sense it is. The present building on Covent Garden's Bow Street site is in fact the third theatre there since 1732, the two earlier buildings having been destroyed by that arch-enemy of the pre-20th century theatre — fire.

The present building, designed by Edward Barry, son of the architect of the Houses of Parliament, has an atmosphere of its own which more than outweighs its very many obvious disadvantages. Despite the notable efforts of the present management to improve its facilities, foyer space is still limited, storage room almost non-existent, back-stage accommodation niggardly, the sight-lines from quite a few seats atrocious, the auditorium split into two water-tight compartments — which while acceptable in the days of Disraeli's "two nations" is not now in accord with the idea of a national opera house for the people — and the general standard of décor, with its cheaply painted marble and cosy red-striped wallpaper, is more homely than magnificent.

Architecturally the best features are the imposing front elevation — only spoilt by the presence of the Crush Bar's glass box behind Barry's palladian pillars — and the always impressive proscenium arch. Acoustically, especially from the house's upper reaches, the building is to the main excellent, even though it is to be doubted whether the stalls circle, that horseshoe tier running round the theatre at stage level, accords with modern conceptions of hi-fi. Yet when all is said and done the Opera House has a warmth, charm and elegance that can hold its own among the theatres of the world.

It is not for nothing that the theatre is called an Opera House, for its history has been far more closely related with opera than with its lyric sister, ballet. Until the present century its contribution to dance history was small, but even before the last war the theatre had started to reverse the balance by offering an occasional London refuge to the ex-patriate Ballets Russes, from Diaghilev onwards. Since the war, when the theatre became a national institution legally and financially, it has become the permanent headquarters of the Royal Ballet. In fact today, owing to circumstances over which the management have no control, the ballet has far more prestige and importance than the highly-subsidised and guest-star-studded opera company. Although this situation will possibly, even probably, prove temporary, nevertheless the next 100 years of the theatre's history is likely to prove more important to ballet history than the last.

June 1958 9th YEAR OF PUBLICATION Vol. 9 No. 6

Dance and Dancers

Editor: PETER WILLIAMS *Associate Editor:* CLIVE BARNES

Assistant Editor : E. C. MASON

WORLD'S LARGEST SALE IN THE FIELD

London can't take it

IN Paris they have a festival, at the Théâtre des Nations, which lasts the whole summer long and companies from all over the world play there; other theatres present classical ballet companies concurrently and everyone does splendid business. In New York, as you will read in this issue, they have never had such a season of dance and the plans for the future are formidable. In Brussels, though this is exceptional on account of the Exhibition, the array of companies appearing there in the next few months is staggering and tantalizing. In London — well, to quote an eminent French critic, "Pour le ballet, maintenant, Londres n'exist pas". Although this is a definite exaggeration there is more than a modicum of truth in it. It is rather humiliating to realise that London has not seen a single foreign classical ballet company since the visit of the Bolshoi nearly two years ago.

Whose fault is this? Is the London public so cold and unwelcoming that nobody wants to come here? It certainly was far from these things for the Bolshoi visit, though this was obviously what is known as a super-attraction. In the past, London has provided a haven for foreign companies provided they were good and presented in the right way. By "the right way" I mean in the right theatre with due warning, not just thrown into the first theatre which happens to become vacant without any sensible publicity. Londoners have not shown up too badly at Covent Garden this season, which in spite of some really fine dancing has been the least inspired season in the whole history of the Royal Ballet, nor is there likely to be any falling-off when London's Festival Ballet has its annual two-month season at Festival Hall. No, I don't think the fault really lies with the London public.

Is it the fault of the impresarios? Here I think we are getting nearer the mark. For the past eight years it has been almost entirely due to the work of Peter Daubeny that we have been honoured by so many foreign imports, and we are all indebted to him for the pleasure he has brought to millions. Unfortunately he has been ill so has been unable to play an active part in ballet presentation. But are we so poor in impresarios that the whole future of visiting foreign companies has to rely on the health of one person? If so, we are indeed in a sorry state. Surely there must be somebody with enough guts to be just a little adventurous and search out and bring to London some of the many companies which are now thriving all over the mainland of Europe. But if somebody does not do something about it pretty quickly, the Londoner will get out of the habit of going to ballet at all, and this will eventually reflect on our home-grown products.

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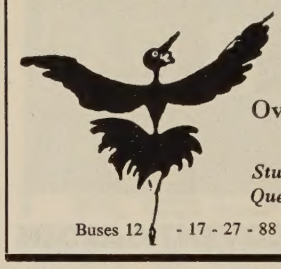

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Suddenly it's Spring

International stars in Monte Carlo for the Easter Season.

by PETER WILLIAMS

IN London, Easter eggs are wrapped up to the accompaniment of falling snow. On the French Riviera they pull down the blinds to stop the chocolate from melting in the shop windows. A mistral makes the palm trees rustle and the white dust blows about, the Mediterranean and the sky match each other in a bright clear blue. Margot Fonteyn leaves the Hôtel de Paris and takes that brief walk to the Monte Carlo Casino — a walk immortalised by Marlene Dietrich in the film *Monte Carlo Story* — on her way to rehearsal. Suddenly it's Spring. Fonteyn, Monte Carlo and the Spring seem to have become inextricably woven together over the past three years.

There are two ballet seasons — at Christmas and Easter — in the Gaveau theatre which is secretly tucked away in the world's first casino. The Easter one, as is right according to nature's relentless cycle, is the most creative. Last year Monte Carlo tried a most successful experiment in creating its own company for the Saison de Pâques. This year the policy has been to make the season as star-studded as possible with a series of galas. The word gala has become something of a joke as in Monte Carlo almost every spectacle is called a gala — they even have gala teas. But the four performances starting on April 5 were, as regards to the dancing about as "gala" as anything you could find in the world today. If you don't think a performance which includes Fonteyn, Chauviré, Amiel, Sombert, Babilée, Renault, Somes and Miskovitch together with the company of Miskovitch's Ballet 1958 de Paris is a gala, then I'm damned if I know what is!

The programme was very long, starting as it did at 8.30 p.m. and ending after midnight; it was also of uneven quality, but as an array of stars it was formidable. It is not easy to muster a number of dancers from all over the place and present them in anything other than a series of *pas de deux* like those dreary concerts we are all getting so sick of. The beauty of this particular programme was that although the main items were in fact *pas de deux* they were also ballets.

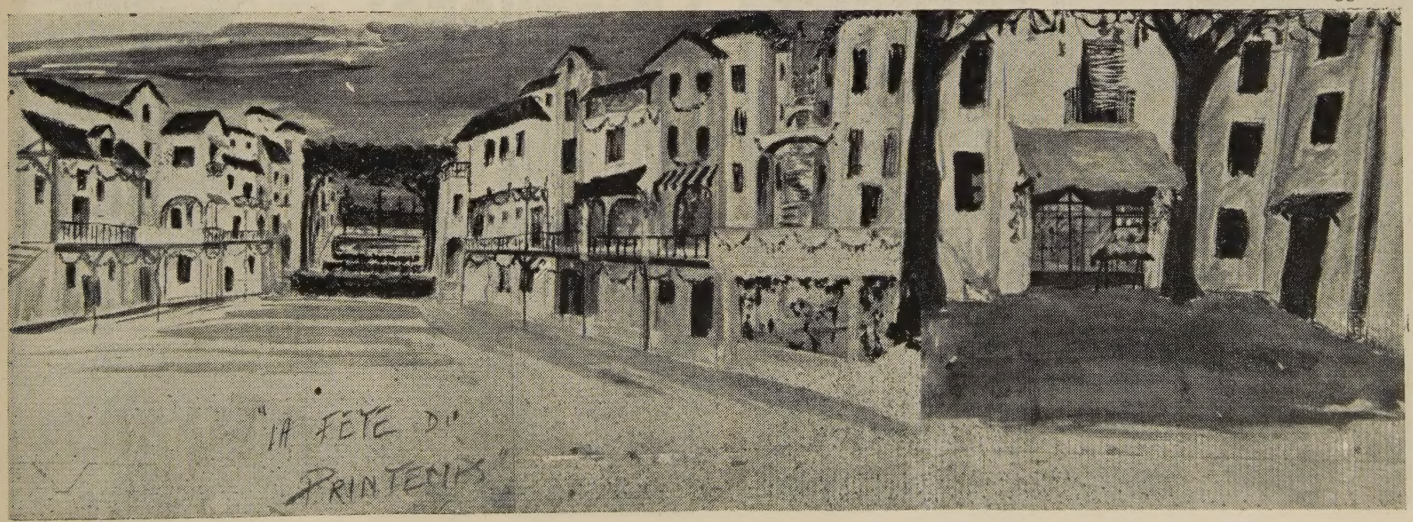
Ballet in outer space

To get these stars into their various orbits, the programme opened with what must have been the first Sputnik ballet, as Jean Guelis's *Cycle* was created for Ballet 1957 de Paris last autumn in Monte Carlo. The fact that André Levasseur designed a setting of a planet with an attendant satellite and that he gave the dancers a form of space costume, caused the work to be immediately christened "Sputnik". It has been called this name by stage-hands and dancers ever since.

The theme is intended to convey the cycle of life on another planet, though in actual fact it is nothing more than a divertissement — variations, *pas de deux, pas de trois* and *ensembles* — which could be placed equally effectively in any environment in this world or any other. A moment of drama is introduced at the end when all the dancers become conscious of something — possibly a satellite or an approaching space-ship — and express fear. This practice of introducing drama at the very end of a mainly abstract work is never very satisfactory, as was proved by Balanchine in his *La Valse*. It creates an uncomfortable mixture of styles as if a slab of granite were placed in the middle of a roccoco wall. I feel that Guelis should have given his choreography a stranger quality and used his floor pattern to greater effect in order to give a feeling of remoteness and other-wordliness. In this respect, Ashton's *Symphonic Variations* is far more effective as an outer space ballet. Nor did I feel that Ivan Semenoff's rather heavy and ponderous score, excellent though it was in parts,

SPRING ON THE BEACH : Vassili Sulich, Ivan Dragadze and Milko Sparemblek, of Ballet 1958 de Paris, on the beach at Monte Carlo. They are the three male dancers in the creation Cache-Cache, *which was given on the opening night of the season.*
Photo : Lido.

SPRING IN THE SPORTING CLUB : Sketches by André Levasseur for La Fête du Printemps *in the Sporting Club. The designs show the incredible way in which the inside of the building was transformed into a Mediterranean village.* *See page 11.*
Photo : Oggero.



helped to place the work in its professed environment.

Forcefully danced as it was by Miskovitch's company throughout, the most memorable part was an *Adage* from Olga Saviska and Milko Sparemblek. Saviska is a dancer from Poland and recently joined the group for its Continental tours. She should make a name for herself in Western Europe as she has so many of the best qualities of a Bolshoi dancer added to great elegance. Her *arabesque* is slowly unfolding and exciting and this quality is apparent in all the movements of her body — starting in the pelvis and moving to the tips of her fingers and her toes.

Apart from this the ballet was hardly memorable though it makes an effective enough opening ballet — it will also have a certain topicality until the day when outer-space becomes as familiar to us all as Piccadilly Circus.

Shakespeare and Kafka

The next ballet should have been Lifar's *Entre Deux Rondes,* danced by Josette Amiel and Michel Renault. Owing to the intervention of Liane Daydé, ballerina of the Paris Opéra, who seems to regard the ballet as her own personal property, Lifar's *Romeo et Juliette* was substituted as the last moment. Having never liked *Entre Deux Rondes,* with its corny romance between a statue and a Dégas dancer in a picture gallery, its omission drew not a tear from me. On the other hand, if I have to see anyone else apart from Vyroubova and Algaroff in Lifar's potted version of Shakespeare's tragedy of Verona, I shall go plumb crazy. Last year the two latter mentioned gave superb performances in this trite work and lifted it on to a plane of its own. This year Amiel and Renault brought it back with a bump to somewhere below the earth's subsurface. Amiel showed no vestige of innocent tenderness and Renault's posturings reminded me more of El Capitano from the Commedia dell'Arte than of a star-crossed lover. Both of them brought the ballet's absurdities into full focus — to see Romeo prancing across the back of the stage playing hectically on an imaginary mandoline evokes a Dhèry revue or a Marx Brothers film more than anything else. Poor Shakespeare! and poor Tchaikovsky, whose symphonic poem graphically realises the full tragedy so much more effectively than anything visual, other than the straight playing of the tragedy as Shakespeare wrote it, could ever hope to achieve.

The middle section of the programme was given over to works danced by the two great ballerinas from France and Britain — Chauviré and Fonteyn. The former made her first appearance in Lifar's *L'Ecuyère,* based on a Kafka novel to Joseph Kosma music.

It is a simple melodrama about a poor young man who dreams of a love affair with a lady circus rider. The dream becomes a reality but this never promising affair is broken up by a jealous ring-master. The young man is left with a broken-hearted clown who was responsible for the ring-master's discovery. Just the sort of story which essentially needed Kafka's mordent prose and a creator far more sensitive than Lifar to realise it choreographically.

It is a work which Chauviré, who dances L'Ecuyère, has appeared in for some years and, apart from the fact that its small cast makes it an effective concert piece, I have always wondered why. The rôle of the mistress of haute-école is hardly one to reveal her great gifts. She has a very brilliant variation in the beginning in the circus ring and her entrance is spectacular, but at the end an uncomfortable sensation is caused by the fact that her acknowledgment of the applause of an imaginary audience far outstrips the applause of the real audience. These attempts at introducing audience participation don't always work out. Kosma's film-background sort of music make the later *pas de deux* seem overdramatic.

Everyone suffers to such an extent that eventually it almost becomes comical. Miskovitch, as the Young Man, was extremely good, though of course he had to suffer more than anyone. His new Yul Brynner head shave was perfectly in accord with the Middle European heaviness of the drama. Sparemblek, as the Clown, has the mobile dead-pan face of a Marcel Marceau and tautly expressive body, and although the rôle is a small one he manages to make it seem of greater importance. If somebody could think up some good clown or harlequin ballet for him they should discover a gold-mine. Vassili Sulich, as Monsieur Loyal the ring-master, tried to hide an engaging personality under a small moustache, but never quite succeeded in realising the brutal and jealous nature of the Kafkarian ring-master. Nepo's sets now look rather makeshift and post-war.

The Péri transplanted

It is strange how different environment can change the whole face of a ballet. Though Dame Ninette de Valois once wrote that a good ballet was a good ballet wherever it was given, experience has taught me to question her statement. It has also taught me that a not so good ballet need not necessarily be not so good everywhere. At Covent Garden, Ashton's *La Péri* has never been entirely satisfactory; in Monte Carlo it proved to be the ideal vehicle for Fonteyn and Somes, appearing away from

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SPRING IN THE CABARET : At the big supper party, given by the Société des Bains de Mer, in the Casino Cabaret, after the opening night of the season. From left to right are : Michel Renault, Dame Margot Fonteyn, Jean Babilée, Marie-Claire Carrié, Iovanka Biegovitch, Michael Somes, Madame Jean Faillard (wife of the author), Peter Williams and the Countess de Gauteruignal. Photos : Oggero and Lido.

the main body of their company. It also happened to fit perfectly into the dimensions of the Monte Carlo stage. Even if there were moments when the dancers were rather curtailed in their perambulations around the stage, the final result was a more compact and complete work than has ever been seen in Covent Garden.

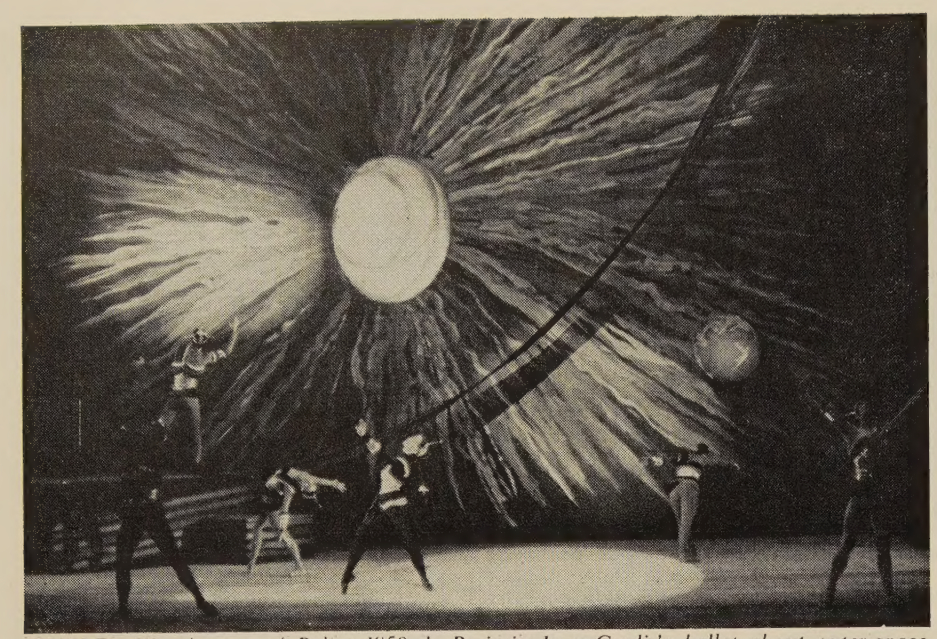
A lot of this change was brought about by a more intelligent handling of André Levasseur's setting. Its constructivist nature, its wing-like cords descending as the Péri is revealed and ascending after she has retrieved the flower, its lighting which casts a more mysterious glow; all these things add up to a good design ,whereas in England it was merely a contrived muddle. The two costumes, as beautiful as ever, give the whole work a sense of being extremely colourful when in fact they are the only factors which supply it.

The smaller theatre also gives greater opportunity of seeing a number of finer points, particularly in Fonteyn's performance, which must often go unnoticed in the vast spaces of Covent Garden. For the first time I became aware of exactly how subtle a performance Fonteyn gives. Her Péri is geographically placed nearer to the Persian Gulf than her Firebird, but there is an undoubted similarity between the two fabulous creatures. The same fear inescapable from capture or the theft of something precious, the same seductive movements to obtain release or the return of the stolen object, the same enigmatic sense of triumph when the goal has been reached. Yet whereas Fonteyn's Firebird is a more rounded creature of legend and Fokine's imagination, her Péri has more of the stylisation of a Persian minature painted on ivory. The allusions to Oriental dance are much more subtle than when the ballet was first given — especially in the hand and head movements — and it now amounts to a complete interpretation instead of a *pas de deux* on a Middle Eastern theme. The work contains one peak moment which, to my mind, is equivalent to those lovely supported *arabesques* in the *pas de deux* from the opening scene in *Firebird* — that is when the Péri is stretching head-first down Iskander's back, stretching and reaching out for the flower which is on the ground.

Somes also has added depth to his interpretation, and he partnered, as always, with a rare nobility which was much appreciated by the French audience, to whom such a phenomenon was rare.

Just how rare was made apparent in Michel Renault's partnering of Chauviré in the *Casse-Noisette pas de deux* which immediately followed. Why anyone should think that it was a good idea to put these two in an overworn *pas de deux,* against black curtains, in such a position in the programme, I simply cannot imagine. But this idiotic piece of planning was not helped by the fact that while Renault was supposed to be concentrating on partnering France's great ballerina he was most visibly grinning at somebody standing in the wings. The version they danced did not bear much relation to the generally accepted version of this *pas de deux,* nor to the one which Karsavina has recently re-created for Fonteyn from the Maryinsky production. Chauviré can seldom be other than impressive, but on this occasion she did not show up too well, and she may well have been tired with two bouts of strenuous dancing

STARS BACKSTAGE ; Left, Milorad Miskovitch (standing in his Cycle *costume), Jean Babilée and Michael Somes (making up for* La Péri). *Right, Yvette Chauviré (in her* L'Ecuyère *costume) with Margot Fonteyn about to go on and dance in* La Péri.
Photos : Lido.



CYCLE : *The dancers of Ballet 1958 de Paris in Jean Guelis's ballet about outer-space which has André Levasseur designs. Miskovitch is seen on the left. Photo : Lido.*

in one part of the programme. Renault was vivacious but too off-hand as a partner and failed to achieve any feeling of the fusion which is surely essential in a classical *pas de deux*.

Death and the Young Man

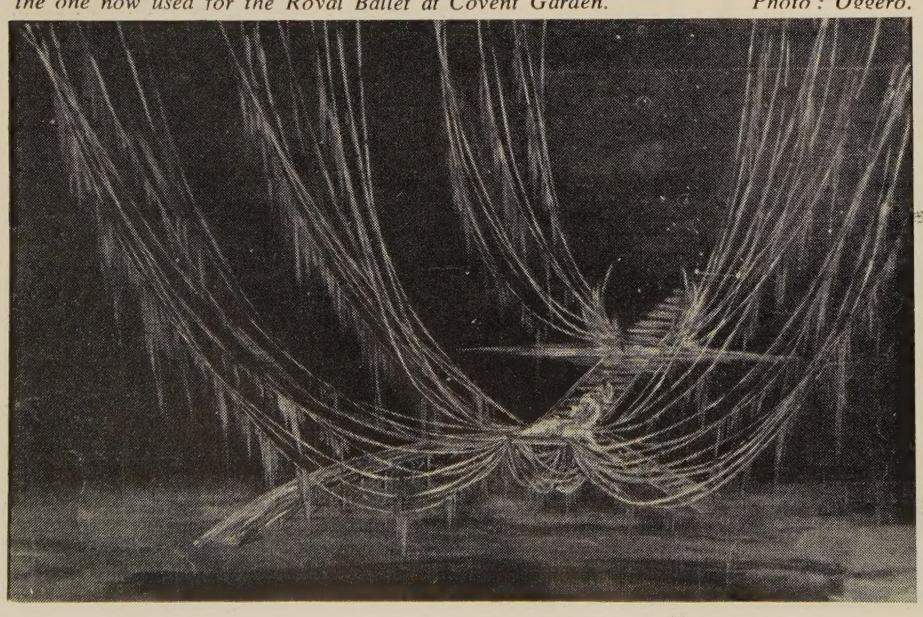
The inevitable long interval preceded *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort*, which opened the final part of the programme, and although the audience was beginning to feel the strain of so much dancing, the first bars of the Bach *C Minor Passacaglia* soon lessened any tension. Years ago I gave up counting the number of times I have seen the young man's rendezvous with death, yet even now, twelve years after its creation, its power to move almost to choking point remains intact.

What is it that makes this such a stupendous theatrical experience? The sweep of Bach's music is not really the background for a man's agonised encounter with his sadistic girl-friend in a sordid attic, his suicide by hanging and his death revealing that she too is death. The choreography — consisting of smoking, waiting, acrobatic leaps on and over tables and the noisy hurling of chairs — is not choreography as we know it. Yet in me it stirs the same emotion as watching a great matador playing a Miura bull — the majestic spectacle of the inevitable triumph of death.

Yet no small part of this ballet's impact is due to the presence of Jean Babilée as the Young Man. He too, like a matador, professes to hate the work and uses short four-letter words when talking about both it and the audience who demand it. All of which is possibly the reason for him still giving one of the most extraordinary performances of our time. Today he is every bit as powerful in the work as he was when it was first created—almost better in places.

The rôle of the girl-death, as everyone must know, was created by Babilée's wife — Nathalie Philippart. It was a part created around certain of her physical features — the long dark hair, the black eyes, the almost enigmatic beauty of her expression. Today Philippart has given up dancing,

LA PERI : *André Levasseur's original design for Ashton's ballet. This is the same as the one now used for the Roval Ballet at Covent Garden. Photo : Oggero.*



and her part is taken by Claire Sombert. Sombert is almost diametrically opposite physically — her hair is fair and she has an open almost timid expression. On the other hand she is a much better dancer. It was obvious that she could never achieve quite the same magnetism as the rôle's creator, but, in a quite different way, she was very good. Somehow it made it even more terrifying that such an innocent girl could be so evil. If only she would use more eye shadow so that her eyes, a very important feature in the interpretation, showed up more, then I think she would be even better than her predecessor. The fact that she is such a strong dancer caused her to match-up to the phenomenal Babilée. I wish that any one of the sets which Wakhevitch has designed for countless productions since *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort* were as apt and well-designed as this still is.

Well, Babilée may be bored with the ballet and he may despise the audience, but there was no doubt about the Monte Carlo audience's reaction to him. This audience, renowned to be the world's most frigid, rose from their seats and cheered in a body. Curtain-call followed curtain-call each night and the only thing that eventually stopped them was the fact that some of the more aged hands had no clap left in them.

Beach Games

After that, anything would come as an anti-climax, and unfortunately the puff-ball weight of *Cache-Cache*, a creation by an ex-Dunham dancer called Ronnie Aul, suffered immeasurably by this juxtaposition. Six dancers of Les Ballets 1958 de Paris — Sparemblek, Sulich, Dragadze, Carrié, Meyer and Biegovitch — disported themselves on a beach designed by André Levasseur. Though the costumes were chic, the work was no *Le Train Bleu*. As far as beach ballets go, nobody has since achieved the wit and the bite of Nijinska's notable creation for the Diaghilev Company.

Though parts of the choreography were interesting, notably *Mon Dieu, Mon Dieu*, for Yvonne Meyer, *Presque Seul* for Vassili Sulich and *Slow Play* for Iovanka Biegovitch and the company, the whole work lacked continuity and was too bitty to create any lasting impression. Everyone came out and did their dances in front of a row of bathing tents and there seemed little reason for them doing so. Even a high-spirited divertissement has to have some motivating force to bind it all together. I had the feeling that the negro dancers, with whom Aul worked in Dunham's company, would have done it all much better. Nevertheless these dancers did all that was in their power — Marie-Claire Carrié turned well, Yvonne Meyer and Milko Sparemblek brought their strong personalities to bear, Ivan Dragadze jumped high and Vassili Sulich was virile. Iovanka Biegovitch, by the beautiful carriage of the upper part of her body, by the positioning of her back and neck and the fluid strength of her arms, showed that she should be doing something more worthy than this. I would like to see her in *Swan Lake*.

Yves Claoué's score was rather derivative and uneven in quality, but like the ballet as a whole it suffered by its close proximity to Bach's *C Minor Passacaglia*.

On the whole a rather exhausting evening, but one whose high moments really were high moments. There is possibly no place in the world other than Monte Carlo that could put on such a star-studded performance. There is also nowhere else that could spend millions of francs to completely transform the inside of a building just for two gala nights; but this is what happened on the following evening.

A village transported

Suddenly it's Spring but on the night of Easter Day, Monte Carlo recreates Spring after midnight in the Sporting Club. The *Fête du Printemps* lives up to its name, and on entering the main hall of the Sporting Club, the heady scent of fresh Spring flowers, culled from the provinces bordering the Mediterranean, is more powerful and intoxicating than those expensively bottled scents worn by most of the guests. André Levasseur has miraculously transformed this ugly hall into a Mediterranean fishing village. The village has everything — shops of all kinds, cafés, the mayor's house, the town hall and even a brothel — and in the distance can be seen the port with its light-house and the winking lights on distant mountains. On all the tables are a mass of the country flowers, already mentioned, beautifully arranged. The guests are equally fabulous and be-diamonded — millionaires and their wives or those they brought with them, film stars, deposed and reigning royalty, dancers, parasites, sybarites and even journalists are jammed together in a throng which, oddly enough, does not seem too incongruous in this rustic setting. Margot Fonteyn enters in a deceptively simple white dress — actually its balloon skirt and plain bodice consist of rows of frilled narrow net — and on her way to the Onassis table almost steals the show.

The lights dim in the windows and balconies, the only illumination coming from the hundreds of little false stars overhead, and a plaintive cry comes from the port side of the village. Men with lanterns call the dancers to the square and soon they are joined by a number of cloaked figures who arrive in procession past the tables of the guests. At a signal, the dancers throw off their cloaks and a soft glow lights up a stage which, in the darkness, has appeared in the middle of the village square. Each holding an arched garland of flowers, the dancers start with simple and effective dances, based on local folk steps. The dances get more lively, the light gets stronger and the costumes of Levasseur get more spectacular. Finally a band of gypsies arrive, led by the choreographer, Arthur Plasschaert, and Janet Hall, until the whole square becomes a whirling mass of colour. Apart from the spectacle put on here for Prince Rainier's marriage, I have never seen a cabaret more effective or in better taste.

Plasschaert is a young Dutchman who is now responsible for the cabaret in the Casino and he has obvious talent for this kind of thing. Although at the moment, his work is not stunningly original it is, on the other hand, incredibly right. He does not give his possé of ravishingly beautiful girls steps that are beyond them but he gives them steps which show them off to the best advantage and bring out each of their individual talents—and I don't mean only those talents which have become mainly associated with the illustrated pages of the cheaper Sunday newspapers.

If all this was not enough to convince anyone that Spring had truly arrived, the spectacle of Fonteyn leaving the Sporting Club in the small hours of the morning clutching a vast bouquet of coloured chocolate Easter eggs can have left no doubt in anybody's mind.

Lady from Spain

Spain's contribution to the Monte Carlo's Spring get-together consisted of Mariemma and Rafael de Cordova. On April 9, they gave a recital accompanied mainly by Enrique Luzuriaga on the piano, though in a few numbers they were augmented by the flamenco singing of Victoriano de Malaga and the guitar playing of Paco de la Isla.

CACHE-CACHE : *A moment from Ronnie Aul's ballet created specially for the Monte Carlo Easter season. Left to right, Yvonne Meyer, Sparembiek, Sallch, Blegovitch, Dragadze and Carrié.* *Photo : Lido.*

I have not seen Mariemma dance for about ten years, not since she appeared in London at Princes Theatre. I remember her as a finely-schooled dancer who was an object lesson to watch but who lacked any fire or theatrical excitement. With a greater knowledge of Spanish dancing acquired over the intervening years I had looked forward to a deeper appreciation of her art. I had also hoped to find the grandeur with which maturity frequently enriches dancers of the Iberean peninsular. Surprisingly enough my memory, which often lets me down these days, had played no funny tricks and the performance I saw Mariemma give in Monte Carlo was vastly similar to the one I saw ten years ago.

There is still no question of her good school, in fact she is the perfect model upon which most aspiring young Spanish dancers can safely base themselves. Her *Cordoba* (to Albeniz music), her *Bolero* and her various regional dances are very precise and neat and immaculately finished. When it comes to flemenco, I am not so sure. Flamenco art is something so different to the mere performance of steps, it is something which has to be "felt".

Although I am seldom impressed by tricks

GYPSIES' ENTRANCE : Arthur Plasschaert and Janet Hall lead on the gypsies in one of the many colourful episodes in La Fête du Printemps *at the Sporting Club.* *Photo : Lido.*

SPANISH VISITORS: Rafael de Cordova and Mariemma dancing in Monte Carlo during the recital they gave on April 9. *Photo: Lido.*

INTERNATIONAL MEETING (below): Standing at the back are Yvette Chauviré, Milorad Miskovitch, Josette Amiel, Eugène Grunberg (impresario for Monte Carlo). Seated are Mariemma and Yvonne Georgi (director of the Hanover Ballet). They all met on the terrace of the Monte Carlo Casino. *Photo: Lido.*

—agonised facial impressions, exaggerated arms and hands, interpolated jumps and turns (and you soon get to learn which of these are genuine embroidery and which are just appliqué)—I do expect a certain depth and that sense of showmanship which is something almost inherent in the Spaniard. Mariemma's flamenco certainly has no tricks but then neither has it any feeling of power gained from the scorched earth of Andalusia. I looked in vain for the majestic arms and the gradual unfolding of the body which makes the great female flamenco dancer the unquestioned queen of her domain. In fact the style of Mariemma in her *Taranto, Por Alegrias* and *Soleares* varied little from her other dances. Everything about her seems too neat and staccato, even to her walk on and off the stage, to give the spectator that deep thrill which those of us who love the Spanish dance almost consider to be our right. She is the sort of dancer whom our old aunts and grandmothers would consider charming, unfortunately charm is not one of the qualities I look for in Spanish dancers apart from those using the Spanish classical vocabulary. Old heretic that I am, I just like to see 'em burn up.

Rafael de Cordova has the looks of a young Laurence Olivier and a forceful personality. But although he managed to generate the same amount of warmth that is noticeable in almost every male dancer from Spain, he rather lacks any sense of style. His roughness was even more thrown into relief by his immaculate partner. Although he brought the much-needed excitement to the programme he did not really seem to be the ideal foil to Mariemma though it must be admitted that he was much to the taste of the audience. Apart from his undeniable physical attraction, he also turns very well indeed. In his solos—Farucca from *Tricorne, Flamenco de Santa Maria* and *Por Rosas* — he seemed far more at home than when he was dancing with Mariemma. He is still young and a few more years of good schooling should polish him up into yet another notable male dancer to emerge from Spain.

Hanover on the Mediterranean

Although I had planned to return to London earlier, the advent of a young German company, one of the very few to have played outside the Fatherland, offered a good opportunity of seeing the work that is now being done in Germany. I changed my plane ticket at the expense of a few vital going-to-press hours on last month's issue.

The Ballet of the Hanover Opera is a young company and has only been in existence for two years. Its ballet director, choreographer and general organiser is Yvonne Georgi, whose position there is very similar to the one that Dame Ninette de Valois occupied during the early days of the Vic-Wells Ballet. Once a partner of Harald Kreutzberg. Yvonne Georgi was later working in Amsterdam among other places; two years ago she took over her present position in Hanover. The opera house there is very well-equipped, Madame Georgi told me, and the stage is big. What is more, the ballet works on excellent terms with the opera company so there is not the usual tug-of-war that takes place in so many opera houses between the two arts.

This was the first time that the young company had ever played outside Germany and the dancers were naturally rather nervous; they were also excited at the prospect of appearing on the sunny Mediterranean.

BACCHUS ET ARIANE : *A scene from Yvonne Georgi's ballet to Roussel music. Gisela Rochow, as Ariadne, and George Volk, as Bacchus, are seen on a rock at the back of the stage.* *Photo : Lido.*

When they arrived, after a 36-hour journey, it was raining — and apparently it continued to do so for most of their visit.

I only managed to see the company twice — once in rehearsal and once in performance — and on both occasions the programme was the same. A rather odd thing happened because, contrary to usual practice, the rehearsal was far better than the performance. The conclusion I came to was that in performance they were not unnaturally rather nervous and not giving of their best, and also that the costumes obscured much of the choreography; at the rehearsal the dancers had appeared in the sets but in practice costume.

It is only by constant touring that a company learns what is the right repertoire to present to a foreign audience but I was rather surprised that the opening programme showed two out of three ballets which were new versions of works well-known in France — Lifar mounted Roussel's *Bacchus et Ariane* at the Paris Opéra in 1931, while Petit created Dutilleux's *Le Loup* for his Ballets de Paris in 1953. Although it is always interesting to see other people's conceptions of existing works, I am uncertain as to the advisability of this practice, specially in the country of their origin, unless the later works are unquestionably better.

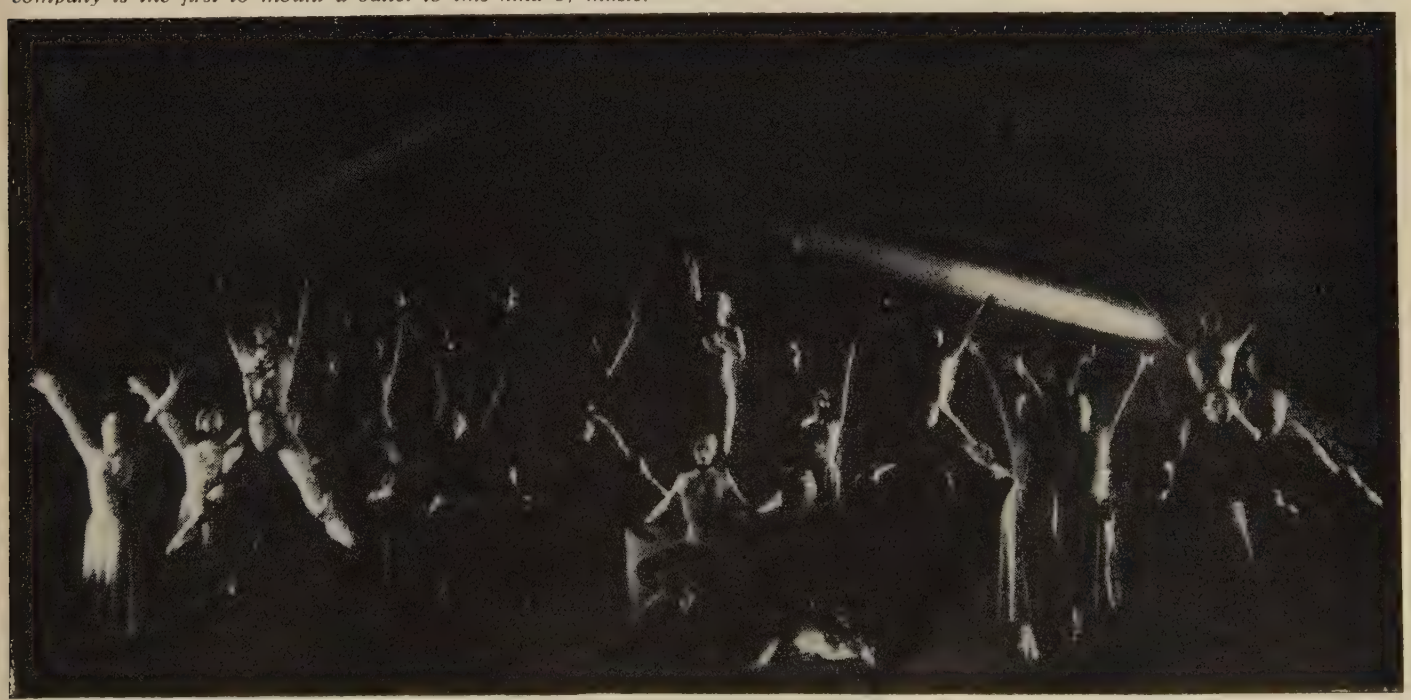
The young company in rehearsal proved to be very well disciplined; off-stage they had excellent manners and showed great enthusiasm for the dance. All these qualities are not always so apparent in Western Europe's more mature companies.

The first programme opened with *Bacchus et Ariane*. Starting off with a general dance, given by this comparatively large company, celebrating Theseus's victory over the Minotaur, the Monte Carlo stage suddenly looked very cluttered and the dancers appeared to have little room to move about in. A company more experienced in these matters would have cut down on the *corps de ballet*.

The Greek myth continued on its course with the love of Theseus for Ariane, the appearance of Bacchus, the fight, Ariane's attempt at throwing herself into the sea, and the final triumph of Bacchus and a bacchanale. All of which demanded a more subtle approach to Roussel's fine score than the slightly heavy tread of Yvonne Georgi's choreography.

Her work lies somewhere between Lifar's neo-classicism and the Central European school. It is expressive and forceful but

BALLET ELECTRONIQUE : *One of the final moments of Yvonne Georgi's ballet to Henk Baddings' electronic music. The Hanover company is the first to mount a ballet to this kind of music.* *Photo : Lido.*



BACCHUS ET ARIANE : *Gisela Rochow, as Ariadne, with Ralph Briegk, as Theseus, in a* pas de deux *from Yvonne Georgi's ballet to Albert Roussel music. Photo : Lido.*

LE LOUP : *Ursula Rieck, as the Fiancée, with Horst Krause, as the Wolf, in a* pas de deux *from Yvonne Georgi's version of Roland Petit's original ballet to Henri Dutilleux music. Photo : Kurt Julius.*

lacking the finer nuances which bring poetry and poignance to themes of this kind. Her dancers tend to batter away at the story rather than realise its mythical content. She obviously has a strong musical sense but there are moment when she ignores its emotional qualities.

Although the dancers have not by any means reached full maturity they mostly appeared to be very malleable material. Gisela Rochow, who danced Ariane, has a most interesting head and will have a very strong technique, but she needs to develop a greater theatrical personality and she needs fining down below her waist. From my point of view it was unfortunate that the last person I saw playing this rôle was Olga Spessivtzeva, whose every appearance is forever indelibly etched in my mind. The Bacchus of George Volk is athletic and the part suited him, even if his scanty costume hardly suited the ballet. He has a good physique and all that it takes to make a fine technician, but it was unfortunate that most of what he had to do bore a strong resemblance to those faun dances in Casino de Paris revues. The third principal dancer, Ralph Briegk, playing Theseus, has a noble bearing but it was really a rather cardboard rôle and never came alive. I was told that he makes an excellent Moor in *Othelo,* but unfortunately that was in the next programme so I never saw it. I would very much like to see all three dancers in a classical ballet which would show up their real qualities. I very much suspect that there may be material here similar to a young Peter Van Dijk.

As all the ballets were choreographed by Yvonne Georgi, so were they all designed by Rudolf Schulz. I found his work in the main rather heavy-handed and lacking in texture and a sense of colour. For *Bacchus et Ariane,* his setting was angular and his costumes mainly in orange and white. Their shape was not always flattering to a dancer's body and it was mainly because of this that the ballet looked so much better in practice costume.

Electronic music

Far more suited to the company and to Georgi's type of choreography was *Ballet Electronique* which followed. The impetus of the work came from Henk Bading's electronic score and is, I believe, the first ballet to use it. The possibilities of such music for ballet need to be dealt with in far greater detail than is possible in an article of this kind, and as I hope that we shall do this in some future issue, I will only say here that it is remarkable effective. The theatre was specially wired-up for it and the sound came from all sides. The only disadvantage of this is that when you hear a sudden noise behind you, the natural instinct is to turn away from the stage and so miss some of the action. I feel, as I feel about *Musique Concréte* for ballet, that it should be used sparingly and that too many works of this kind will soon become a bore.

Using the floor, unusual lifts and different levels, the dancers, mainly dressed in all-over tights of various pastel shades, swirled and surged. Occasionally a person or group would emerge for a brief moment and then return back to the anoymoust rout. Dominating it all was George Volk, dressed in bright scarlet.

There did not seem to be any tangible plot unless it had something to do with outer space again, though some searchlights playing across the black backcloth also suggested an air-raid. But the mixture of sounds, the effective lighting and the many beautiful patterns of Georgi's choreography combined to create a profound effect and an unusual sensation of being suspended in space where time had ceased to matter. Of the works I saw it is undoubtedly this that will bring the company its greatest success outside its own country.

Wolf in a German forest

If memory of Lifar's *Bacchus et Ariane* is somewhat hazy, then that of Petit's *Le Loup* is pungently strong. Through every moment of Yvonne Georgi's version of this work, which finished the evening, I found myself making comparisons step by step. Had it been a completely new conception of the ballet it would not have mattered so much, but there were references to Petit all through. In many ways this new version was more complete and the faults which mar so many of Petit's works were not visible. But whereas the poetry of Petit's approach to any subject leaves a lasting impression however weak it may be in its minor parts, it is now only Dutilleux's score that remains to haunt you — that and Horst Krause's performance of the Wolf. When Petit danced this rôle he became more of an animal Prince; Krause, not unlike Babilée when he took it over for some unforgettable performances at the Stoll Theatre, is all wolf. The animal nature of the character and the brutal nature of Anouilh's story were both thrown into greater relief than in the original version.

The rôle of the young girl who is tricked into having a love affair with a wolf and who with him eventually meets death, was danced by Ursula Rieck. Although young, she did not achieve the trusting innocence that Verdy made so unforgettable. The parts of the Young Man (Ralph Briegk) and the gypsy girl to whom he was attached (Diane Mansart) were too lightly sketched-in to create much effect, as indeed they were in Petit's version.

Rudolf Schulz's set had the same skeletal vertical trees, only more so, as did Carzou's. But there any resemblance ended, though it must be said that the abstract backcloth in greens, blues and mauves was very well painted — but it would be excellent for another ballet. The costumes were undistinguished and the girl's skirts seemed to be just the wrong length.

I think that the Hanover company suffers from having too many works by one choreographer and also from the practice of re-creating so many works which have also achieved fame from other hands. It is a most promising group but it is essential for young dancers to assimilate different styles; over-acquaintance with only one creator can adversely affect their whole outlook in the end.

L'Amour et son Destin

First given by the International Ballet of the Marquis de Cuevas at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, Paris, on March 21, 1958. Ballet in two acts and eight scenes by Serge Lifar. Joint Choreographer, Dmitri Parlic. Music by Tchaikovsky (Symphonie Pathétique). **Designed by Georges Wakhevitch.**

The Woman ..... NINA VYROUBOVA
The Man ..... SERGE GOLOVINE
Destiny ..... GENIA MELIKOVA
Seduction ..... JACQUELINE MOREAU
The Red Warrior ..... GEORGE GOVILOFF
Two other Warriors...NICHOLAS POLAJENKO, WASIL TUPIN
White Angels...BEATRIZ CONSUELO, SOLANGE GOLOVINA, OLGA MARCHEEVA, MARIA SANTESTEVAN
and *Corps de Ballet*

PROTAGONISTS: Serge Golovine, as the Man, with Nina Vyroubova, as the Woman, in a pas de deux *from Lifar's* L'Amour et son Destin.

SETTING FOR DESTINY (below, left): The picture shows the groupings and Wakhevitch's setting for Lifar's ballet.

Photos: Lido.

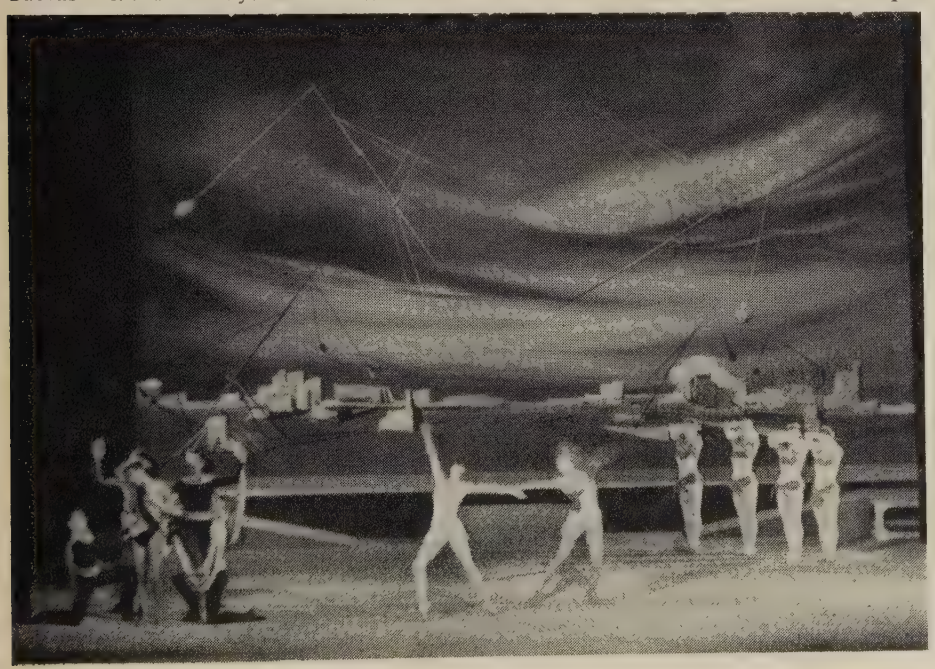
L'*AMOUR et son Destin* is undoubtedly the most original new work this company has presented, not only during this season but in recent years. It is an ambitious ballet and, despite a few reservations, it fulfils its ambition. What flaws there are mainly arise from the splitting up of the choreography between Serge Lifar and Dmitri Parlic.

For some time Lifar has been attracted by Tchaikovsky's *Symphonie Pathétique*, although it is hardly his usual practice to try to add lustre to a symphony as important as this and so powerful in its musical design. One is aware of the difficulties inherent in this *genre* and of the extremely unequal success that certain similar ballets by Massine and Balanchine have had.

From the very beginning this work evokes dance: in fact it almost suggests it. The history of the piece itself supplies the emotional theme of the ballet. It is known that on the day after his break with Nadejda von Meck, that Tchaikovsky, grieved by the death of several friends, started this symphony. It was received coldly at its first hearing, which only preceded by a few days his own death by cholera on November 5, 1893. Without becoming involved in the metaphysical argument, which is in itself a little confused, one can note the general lines of the action, which is a struggle between love, destiny, genius and death — the basis of art and of human life.

Originally Lifar had dreamt of creating this work simultaneously at the Opéra with Yvette Chauviré and for the Marquis de Cuevas with Nina Vyroubova. We must regret that not only was he prevented from doing this, but that he was not even able to achieve finishing this monumental work for the de Cuevas company himself. Thus Dmitri Parlic agreed to assist him: a delicate collaboration in which this Yugoslav choreographer was neither able to work in his own style, nor successfully assume the style of his senior. It is therefore easy to distinguish the strong and weak sections. And judging by the exceptional quality of the former, it is unfortunate that Lifar was unable to carry out the assignment to its end.

Deeply dramatic, the score has moved Lifar profoundly and the finished product reveals a most delicate sense of music. The rôles of the Man and the Woman in particular display a plastic treatment, and an invention to which is allied a rare fidelity to the most subtle musical inflections. The *adages*, where passion is coloured by the most subtle shades of modesty and delicate freshness, are of the highest quality. The brutal interventions of Destiny introduce an anguish which does not cease increasing until the final separation and the torments which are linked to the melody of the final adagio, a true hymn of requiem. While the realm of Seduction appears a little tame and conventional, and is responsible for some of the interest subsiding, the *scherzo* is a brilliant display of male virtuosity (using diagonal jumps and *pirouettes)* and a magnificent contrast to the lyrical sadness of the ending.



Nina Vyroubova makes an impressive and thrilling portrait of the Woman. Her art is now at its highest peak, and she moves one by her rare sensitivity and the beauty of her line, which gives to the slightest gesture an inexpressible poetry. Through her, shape becomes life and emotion is clearly expressed.

Considered until now as little more than a technician, Serge Golovine brings sincere expression to a rôle which will become a milestone in his career. Surrounded by George Goviloff (conspicuous for his jumps), Nicholas Polajenko and Wasil Tupin, Genia Melikova is a "Fate" which cannot be appeased. But less well-served by the choreography is Jacqueline Moreau, who is unable to give her best in the rôle of Seduction.

George Wakhévitch is responsible for the costumes and décors, which are hardly in keeping with the general mood of the ballet. Approaching surrealist in style, they are confused and abstract, and at their most complicated spoil the silhouettes of the dancers. A much greater simplicity of design would have served the undeniable romanticism of this work far better. Yet it is a ballet which is attractive on more than one count. **Marie-Françoise Christout.**

SAILOR IN LOVE: Serge Golovine as Antonio, with Nina Vyroubova, as Rosaria, in a pas de deux *before he goes to sea. He gets drowned but Rosaria's entreaties to the Madonna bring him back to earth for a short time.*
Photo: Lido.

La Lampara

First given at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan, in 1957. First given in Paris by the International Ballet of the Marquis de Cuevas at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées in March 1958. Ballet in two scenes by Ugo dell'Ara. Music by Franco Donatoni. Choreography and designs by Ugo dell'Ara.

Cast

Rosaria	NINA VYROUBOVA
Antonio	SERGE GOLOVINE
Giacomo	WASIL TUPIN
The Mother	LILLIAN WELLEIN
The Father	DON SPOTTSWOOD

ALTHOUGH closely related in theme to *Noces Fantastiques*, *La Lampara* suffers from a double handicap. Firstly, the plot is badly balanced: the linking of scenes lacks continuity and the action is spoilt by various improbabilities. Next, and more serious because there is nothing to be done about it, is the music, which is mediocre. It was unfortunate that it had to be used because as a result of its modernistic texture it could hardly be more unsuitable for a romantic drama. Only in its interpretation does the work maintain a certain interest.

The action is set in Southern Italy during the Festival of the Virgin. A fisherman, Antonio, succeeds in winning the love of Rosaria, but in doing so incurs the jealousy of Giacomo, whom she rejects in his favour. The sailors go off to the sea, but after only two minutes' absence they return to continue their happy dances — but without Antonio, who is lost at sea! Disconsolate, Rosaria has two successive attacks made on her by Giacomo, who is in doubt about her virtue. But by imploring the Madonna, she achieves Antonio's return to earth in a matter of seconds. Despite the miraculous character of this apparition it excites no surprise in his companions. Rosaria will continue her love in death.

Choreographically the work reveals one interesting rôle: that of Rosaria, which is brought to life with dramatic intensity by Nina Vyroubova. To pathetic expressiveness, she adds speed and a savage fury which is really remarkable in the two scenes of violence. Serge Golovine is a gentle and sad Antonio. Wasil Tupin is entrusted with the unpleasant rôle of the traitor. Often the groups on stage only play an episodic part in the action, and they are used with a lack of psychological logic. The décors are traditional but colourful costumes are also the work of the choreographer.

Gaîté Parisienne

First given by Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo at the Théâtre de Monte Carlo in 1938. Revived by International Ballet of the Marquis de Cuevas at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées in March, 1958. Choreography by Leonide Massine. Music by Jacques Offenbach. Designed by Comte Etienne de Beaumont.

Baron	NICHOLAS POLJENKO
Baron	NICHOLAS POLAJENKO
Peruvian	LEONIDE MASSINE

LESS known in France than *Le Beau Danube*, *Les Femmes de Bonne Humeur* and *La Boutique Fantasque*, *Gaîté Parisienne* has been welcomed with all the more pleasure because Massine himself appeared in the rôle of the Peruvian and again revealed his great artistry.

Although this ballet was created twenty years ago, it wears perfectly and does not

GAIETY RETURNS HOME: Massine's Gaîté Parisienne *has its first performance for many years in the city which inspired it. Left, Rosella Hightower as the Glove-Seller, in a* pas de deux *with Nicholas Polajenko playing the Baron. Right, Leonide Massine in his famous rôle as the Peruvian.*
Photos: Lido.

show a single wrinkle. There is no escaping the fact that on the whole it is an uneven work and has none of the harmonious balance which makes Massine's other light works, already mentioned, so memorable. Apart from this, however, *Gaîéte Parisienne* once again demonstrates his undoubted genius as a producer.

The *corps de ballet* and onlookers on stage relax and unbend together with carefree gaiety and high spirits. Waiters, barmaids, coquettes and Can-Can dancers (led by Solange Golovina) follow dukes, officers or lovelorn barons and pause in unexpected positions like a company of marionettes.

Winning every hand and wounding every heart with savage humour, Rosella Hightower makes a dazzling coquette out of the Glove Seller. On the face of it this would not seem to be the rôle for Hightower yet she gives it all with such verve and charm that it amounts to one of her happiest recent creations.

In the rôle of the Peruvian, which he originally created for himself, Massine seems to defy the years. With his two carpet bags, his droll humour and his theatrical skill, he scuttles through the ballet and weaves it together. If this is not one of Massine's most rewarding parts, it is still one that reveals a stage mastery and personality rare in ballet today.

While we admire the Polka, Mazurka, Can-Can and Quadrille for their gaiety and sparkle, the intrusion of the *Bacarolle Venetienne* is to be regretted. Tortoni's boulevard café is so far from the canals of Guiletta's Venice in Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffman* that such an intrusion is quite superfluous.

In spite of the fact that the programme declares that Comte Etienne de Beaumont's costumes are of the Winterhalter period, so loud and clashing are they that they can owe nothing to this eminent society painter of the last century, nor have they anything in common with Constantine Guys or that great couturier of the period — Worth.

These things apart, the revival was well worth while, and the company, which has achieved a new discipline with the return of John Taras as its ballet master, gave it all with verve and a sense of style.

Marie-Françoise Christout.

Concerto

First given by the Opéra-Comique Ballet and the Opéra-Comique on March 28, 1958. Music by André Jolivet. Choreography by George Skibine. Designed by André Delfau.

Cast
MARJORIE TALLCHIEF
GEORGE SKIBINE MICHEL RAYNE
and *Corps de Ballet*
Pianist ..... LUCETTE DESCAVES

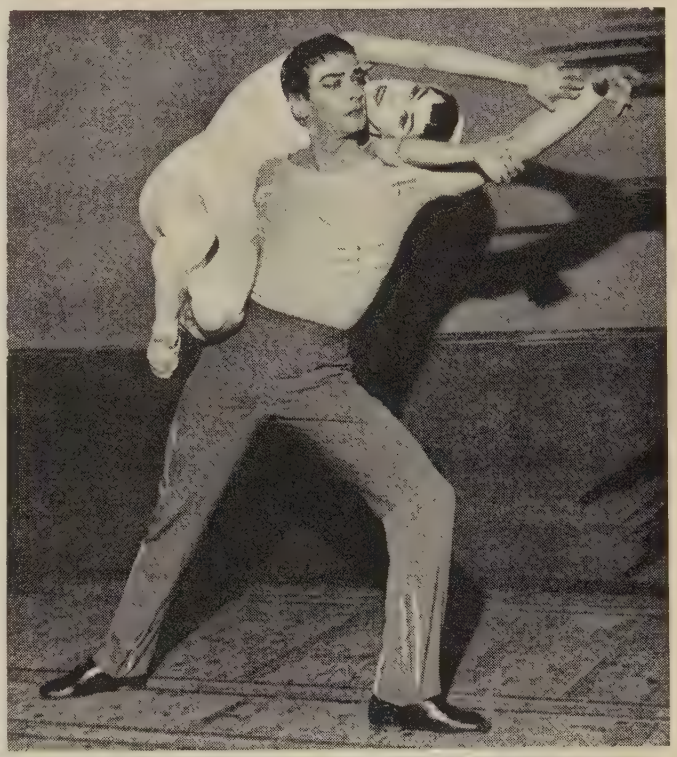
CONCERTO, which was given at the Opéra Comique on March 28, has proved to be one of George Skibine's most important works. The type of ballet was determined by the structure of the score — André Jolivet's concerto for piano and orchestra which was remarkably played by Lucette Descaves under the direction of the composer himself. The choreographic action, to quote the programme, has been inspired by episodes in Sean O'Casey's play, *Red Roses for Me*. To say the least, this appears to confuse the issue because the work itself can be viewed as pure dance.

In final analysis it is the forceful and percussive music which, through its daring approach, dictates the action, and it sometimes diverts the enthusiast by its complex rhythms. Skibine has striven with intelligence and fidelity to give a plastic interpretation to its contrasts — the sharp or angular rhythms which are sometimes deliberately awkward. Love and desire in turn fight for possession of the woman. As in the past, Skibine's most original choreography is seen in the *pas de deux*, and in this section he and Tallchief distinguish themselves by their perfect teamwork and understanding. Tallchief is nevertheless outstanding: the rôle is literally made to measure for her and it suits her style to perfection. The groups, led by Michel Rayne, intermingle rapidly, and they allow one to appreciate the real progress made by the male *corps* which has recently been strengthened by new blood.

Two abstract backcloths by André Delfau provide the atmosphere. The costumes, some of which are practice clothes, oscillate between realism and convention and are the least satisfactory element in the work.

This ballet may possibly start a new policy at the Opéra Comique so that its relationship with the main company at the Paris Opéra will amount to something similar to that which used to exist between the Sadler's Wells Ballet and the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet. Skibine is definitely interested in working with the young group and it is hoped that in this way other young choreographers may also help to create a more experimental repertoire than is possible in the bigger theatre.

Marie-Françoise Christout.



O'CASEY INSPIRED: Left, Marjorie Tallchief and George Skibine in a pas de deux *from* Concerto. *Below, a general group from the same work. This near-abstract ballet was inspired by episodes from Sean O'Casey's play,* Red Roses For Me. *Photos: Lido.*

ORIGINAL SKETCHES: These and the device at the top of the opposite page are the original sketches by Helen McGehee upon which Martha Graham based her costume designs for Clytemnestra.

Clytemnestra

First given by Martha Graham's Danc Company at the Adelphi Theatre, New York, on April 1, 1958. Music by Halim El-Dabh. Sets by Isamu Noguchi. Choreography and costumes by Martha Graham.

Cast

The Messenger of Death	DAVID WOOD
Clytemnestra	MARTHA GRAHAM
King Hades	GENE McDONALD
Helen of Troy	ETHEL WINTER
Agamemnon	RICHARD KUCH
Iphigenia	YURIKO
Orestes	BERTRAM ROSS
Electra	HELEN McGEHEE
Paris	GENE McDONALD
Aegisthus	PAUL TAYLOR
Cassandra	MATT TURNEY

PART I: 1, The Messenger of Death. 2, Clytemnestra, King Hades and Chorus. 3, Helen of Troy. 4, The Rape of Troy. 5, Clytemnestra and King Hades. 6, Agamemnon and the Sacrifice of Iphigenia. 7, Orestes and Electra. 8, The Furies. 9, The Chorus summons the Characters. 10, Clytemnestra, Cassandra, Orestes and the Furies.

PART II: 1, King Hades as the Watchman, The Fall of Troy. 2, Dance of Jubilation. 3, The Entrance of Agamemnon's Spears. 4, Clytemnestra's Meditation. 5, Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. 6, Clytemnestra's Dance of Vengeance. 7, Agamemnon in Triumph. 8, Electra's Greeting. 9, The Seduction of Agamemnon. 10, Cassandra. 11, The Murder of Agamemnon and Cassandra. 12, Aegisthus, Clytemnestra and the Furies.

PART III: The Queen's Bedroom at Mycenae. 1, Clytemnestra's Dream, the Ghost of Agamemnon. 2, Electra and the Mourners. 3, Orestes, Electra and the Ghost of Agamemnon. 4, The Family. 5, The Murder of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. 6, Orestes and the Furies.

PART IV: The Underworld.

ARGUMENT

CLYTEMNESTRA and Helen of Troy were sisters, the daughters, according to a legend, of Leda and Zeus. They married brothers, Agamemnon and Menelaus, the sons of King Atreus of Mycenae. Helen, who had "terribly the look, close-up, of the immortal goddesses . . .," was seduced by Paris and carried away to Troy. Agamemnon and Menelaus drained all of Greece of its manhood in raising the armies that would sail to Troy to win her back; Clytemnestra was left alone in Mycenae, in a palace itself drained of men. "It is evil and a thing of terror," she said, "when a wife sits in the house forlorn with no man by." But it was her sister Helen, not she, who sat forlorn, idle in Troy. Clytemnestra ruled Mycenae; with her "male strength of heart," she was both King and Queen to the State, both father and mother to her children.

Evil and things of terror came quickly. The great armies gathered at Aulis, ready to sail for the Trojan War, were stopped by storms. Agamemnon was told by a prophet that he was the cause: he had offended the goddess Artemis and the weather would not break until he had offered a suitable sacrifice. Agamemnon sent messengers back to Mycenae to tell Clytemnestra that he had arranged a marriage between Achilles, the greatest of the Greek heroes, and their daughter, Iphigenia. Clytemnestra prepared Iphigenia ("my love, my flower of pain," she called her) for this great wedding and sent her to Aulis and there Agamemnon took her and sacrificed her to the goddess. The weather broke, the fleet sailed and the Trojan War began.

For revenge, Clytemnestra would have killed her young son, Agamemnon's beloved Orestes, but the boy was saved by Electra, his sister, who sent him away into hiding on Mount Parnassus. Clytemnestra ruled like a man, took a lover, the "womanish" Aegisthus, who was Agamemnon's cousin and blood-enemy, waited and plotted.

Beacon fires, lighted across the face of the ancient world, announced the fall and destruction of Troy. Clytemnestra described it all to the people of Mycenae in an ecstatic vision. Agamemnon, arrogant in his triumph, returned, bringing with him his captive and mistress, Cassandra, the royal princess of Troy, who had the gift of infallible prophecy and the curse that no one who heard her would believe. Clytemnestra received them with great pomp, spread for Agamemnon a gorgeous robe to walk upon and led him into the palace and killed him. Cassandra shrieked her prophecy of his death and of her own but none of the people believed. She went after Agamemnon into the palace and it was not long before Clytemnestra reappeared, declaring herself a murderess but "a righteous craftsman". She defied the people of Mycenae, married Aegisthus and continued her rule, thinking that, since her own lust for vengeance had been satisfied, no more evil would be done.

But that lust had passed to her daughter, Electra. As Clytemnestra had waited for Agamemnon, Electra waited for her brother, Orestes.

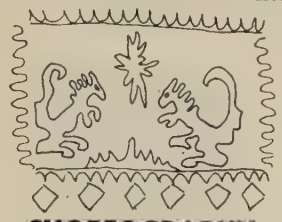
Orestes, grown to manhood, returned to Mycenae disguised as a traveller, revealed himself to Electra and together they plotted revenge for their father's death. As Clytemnestra, with the help of Aegisthus, had murdered Agamemnon and Cassandra, Orestes, with Electra's help, murdered Aegisthus and Clytemnestra.

The lust for vengeance passed back again to Clytemnestra. From the kingdom of the dead, from "that most deep and subterranean end of wandering", where of all the Greeks she alone went dishonoured, Clytemnestra pursued Orestes, set the Furies "his mother's wrathful hounds", upon him and drove him mad. She would have destroyed him if it had not been for a great trial that took place on the rock of Athens in which Orestes, as accused, and the Furies, as accusers, submitted the case to an Athenian jury and to Athena herself. The goddess, in casting the deciding vote in Orestes' favour, put an end to the evil and things of terror. She ripped apart the terrible net of murder and vengeance, of love-in-hate and hate-in-love, the weaving of which had begun in the ancestral past and which Clytemnestra and Helen and Agamemnon had themselves woven to such a length that it snared all of Greece and Troy and virtually destroyed both. Athena freed Orestes of the blood-curse and transformed the Furies into the Eumenides, "the well-wishers," the conscience of humanity.

Martha Graham's *Clytemnestra* begins in the underworld, that "most deep and subterranean end of wandering". Dishonoured in the presence of Hades, the King of the Dead, she begins to weave again in memory the terrible net that doomed her: she begins the supreme human effort to understand the past and her fate. Helen of Troy appears, beautiful herald of the terror she caused, and Clytemnestra sees again the vision of the rape of Troy. She sees the sacrifice of Iphigenia, then the fateful scene of Orestes' and Electra's meeting and plotting her death. She and Orestes confront each other and together face, in a torment of memory, all of the figures who were woven through their lives: Helen, Paris, Electra, Aegisthus, Iphigenia, Agamemnon and finally Cassandra. At the sight of Cassandra, Clytemnestra is again possessed by the lust for vengeance.

In Parts II and III, Clytemnestra relives the actual scenes of her life from the time when, from the rooftops of Mycenae, the Watchman announced the fall of Troy to the moment when, in the dead of night in the palace, her nightmares became reality and she and her lover were murdered by her own son.

The Underworld is again the scene in Part IV. Here Clytemnestra resolves the terrible conflicts of her life and heart.



CHOREOGRAPHY

THE action begins and ends in Hades, where Clytemnestra dwells, first in torment with her fearful memories, then, during the course of this dance work, relives and observes the dark and tragic events during her life, coming, finally, to a promise of release and rebirth. As conceived and danced by Martha Graham, this dance work is a psychological recreation of the legends of the House of Atreus and it expresses the inner drama of the legendary figures of the Orestreia. However, it is in no sense a danced version of these legends. Rather, it is an emotional communication and revelation developed in a ritualistic form that is at times archaic, at others almost surrealist. Actually, it is an artist's calculated summation of these legends in completely twentieth century terms.

It is a journey into the heart and mind of Clytemnestra and it is the most monumental undertaking in Graham's long and distinguished career. Again, as in *Errand Into The Maze, Night Journey* and *Cave Of The Heart,* she evokes the universal ritual and now she gives us the summation of all of her explorations into mystic-emotional experience. Though this is a stupendous stage piece, it has a complete simplicity in its choreographic communication. Nowhere is there a phrase or a pose that might possibly be termed "pure Greek". Instead, it is more a kind of archaic, and sometimes even Oriental-like movement, fused into a contemporized dance language that seems the inevitable way to project this plot.

DANCING

QUITE naturally, the focus of the whole work centres on Clytemnestra, and in the title rôle Martha Graham is constantly magnificent whether she is dancing with whip-like velocity or is in repose where her striking state of calm is such that she cannot be ignored despite what is happening elsewhere on the stage. For her current season this great dance star was supported by the most brilliant company that she has assembled in the past two decades. They are all exceptional actors capable of maintaining a wonderful sense of drama, as well as being brilliant technically, young and extremely good-looking. It is almost impossible to single out any one dancer above the others since they are all so expert, and particularly memorable were the vital Bertram Ross as Orestes, lithe and beautiful Ethel Winter as Helen, dynamic Helen McGehee as Electra, Matt Turney as Cassandra, Yuriko as Iphigenia, Paul Taylor as Aegisthus and the new and exciting Gene McDonald in his rôles as Hades, Paris, Agamemnon's ghost and as Watchman. Also contributing importantly were David Wood as The Messenger of Death and the six dancers performing so brilliantly as the Furies — Ellen Siegel, Akiko Kanda, Carol Payne, Ellen Graff, Bette Shaler and Lois Schlossberg.

MUSIC

THE fine score by Halim El-Dabh (evidently he co-operated closely with the choreographer every step of the way) is truly functional and marvellously integrated with the dance action. Chiefly dissonant, it shrieks, moans and wails its vivid accompaniment to the dance and is, indeed, an inseparable element of it. Adding to its power is the inclusion of a male and female singer who, as chorus, sit on either side of the proscenium arch speak-singing the introductions of characters and various elements of the plot. At times these singers are also used as tone instruments and their pitched voices blend superbly with the reedy, woodwind section of the orchestra, providing an almost Kabuki-like effect.

THE DEATH OF CLYTEMNESTRA : Orestes (Bertram Ross) stands over the body of Clytemnestra (Martha Graham). *Photo : Arnold Eagle.*

DECOR

ISAMU NOGUCHI'S simple settings are extremely elegant and completely fulfil their purpose. As in his previous works for Graham, these settings are, at the same time, deeply symbolic. There is a dark grey translucent curtain that moves horizontally across the stage. A slanting platform, a few interchangeable set pieces, a throne-like chair and crossed spears bound together comprise the chief décor for this dance drama and these are lit with Jean Rosenthal's customary genius.

The costumes, designed by Martha Graham after drawings by Helen McGehee, are visually exciting and splendid to watch in action. Especially noteworthy are the women's costumes, which are black, have one broad shoulder strap, a fitted torso and are cut so that they appear as draped trousers from the front yet have a skirt at the back. For the female principal dancers colour is supplied chiefly by brilliant symbolic patterns applied to the underskirt and again at the base of the cape-like scarves.

REACTION

AT no time during her career has Graham received such press notices. John Martin, writing in the *New York Times,* devoted two complete Sunday columns to it, calling this new creation "definitely a work of giant stature". The *New York Herald-Tribune's* Walter Terry hailed it as "a monumental summation of her vivid and demanding approach to dance". *Variety,* the weekly theatrical newspaper, suggested "It's about time that America dubbed Martha Graham 'Dame Martha' . . . the immediate occasion for this un-United States-ian suggestion is the opening of Miss Graham's all-too-brief Spring repertory season at the Adelphi Theatre of a new dance-drama, *Clytemnestra.*"

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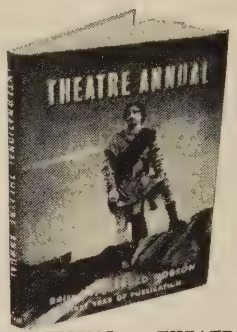

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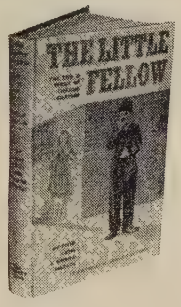

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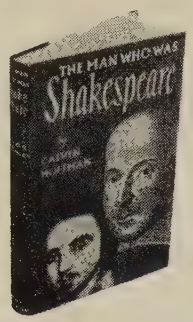

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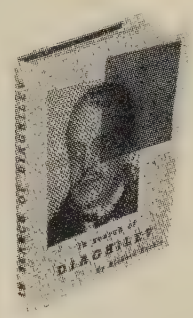

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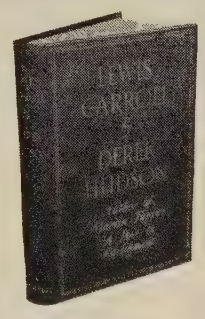

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A GAME FOR MORE THAN ONE: The dancers of Royal Ballet (I) in a moment from the Covent Garden production of MacMillan's Solitaire. *In the front row are Anya Linden and Maryon Lane. In the second row are Pirmin Trecu, Ronald Hynd and Brian Shaw. In the picture at the bottom of the page are Linden and the girls in a mourning episode. Photos: Roger Wood.*

Solitaire transplanted

THE first performance on March 14 of MacMillan's *Solitaire* at Covent Garden came like an act of betrayal from one of one's closest friends. It seemed unbelievably wrong and miserable. The work had been taken into the main company's repertoire for the purposes of its last American tour. During the New York season, in which the cast was initially the same as the Covent Garden first performance, with the sole exception of the substitution in London of Pirmin Trecu for David Blair, the ballet had received a fierce going-over from the American critics. At the time I wondered why, seeing the production the reasons became fairly evident.

The Covent Garden production, without changing a step or note and making only minimal modifications to the scenery, somehow contrived to lose enough of the work's essential atmosphere needed to transform it from a ballet of distinction into a piece of the purest commonplace. To an extent some of the responsibility for this change was due to the large Opera House environment which tended to dampen the intimate high spirits of the work which were so apparent against the homely background of the Sadler's Wells Theatre.

Yet the change of theatre was only part of the reason for the decline — and, as could be seen later, it was in fact less important than it at first seemed. The whole key to the revival's comparative lack of success was to be found in Anya Linden's portrayal of the principal rôle. Showing a profound misunderstanding of the work's intentions she interpreted the part as childish instead of childlike, and her little-girl radiance proved no substitute for the air of enchanted wonder that the ballet requires.

Solitaire is a ballet about innocents and, more important, innocence. Its central character-acting, as it were, in the dual capacity of heroine and commère, has a series of encounters, perhaps in memory, perhaps in imagination or perhaps even in actuality, with other children. Always she is trying to be accepted by them, but while they will play with her, they can never let her join them.

When the ballet was first produced this central part was remarkably well danced by Margaret Hill, who here gave one of the finest characterisations in the brief history of the Royal Ballet. In the circumstances it seemed incredible that the revival should be entrusted to someone else.

Eventually Margaret Hill was given the opportunity to dance the ballet at Covent Garden, and almost immediately the work fell back into its original perspective. Her grace, tenderness and delicacy, combined with her sure feeling for the under-scored emotion of the ballet, came over as well at Covent Garden as it had in the smaller house. She made every gesture and expression significant with the warmth of her personality. Hers remains one of those performances that makes ballet-going worthwhile.

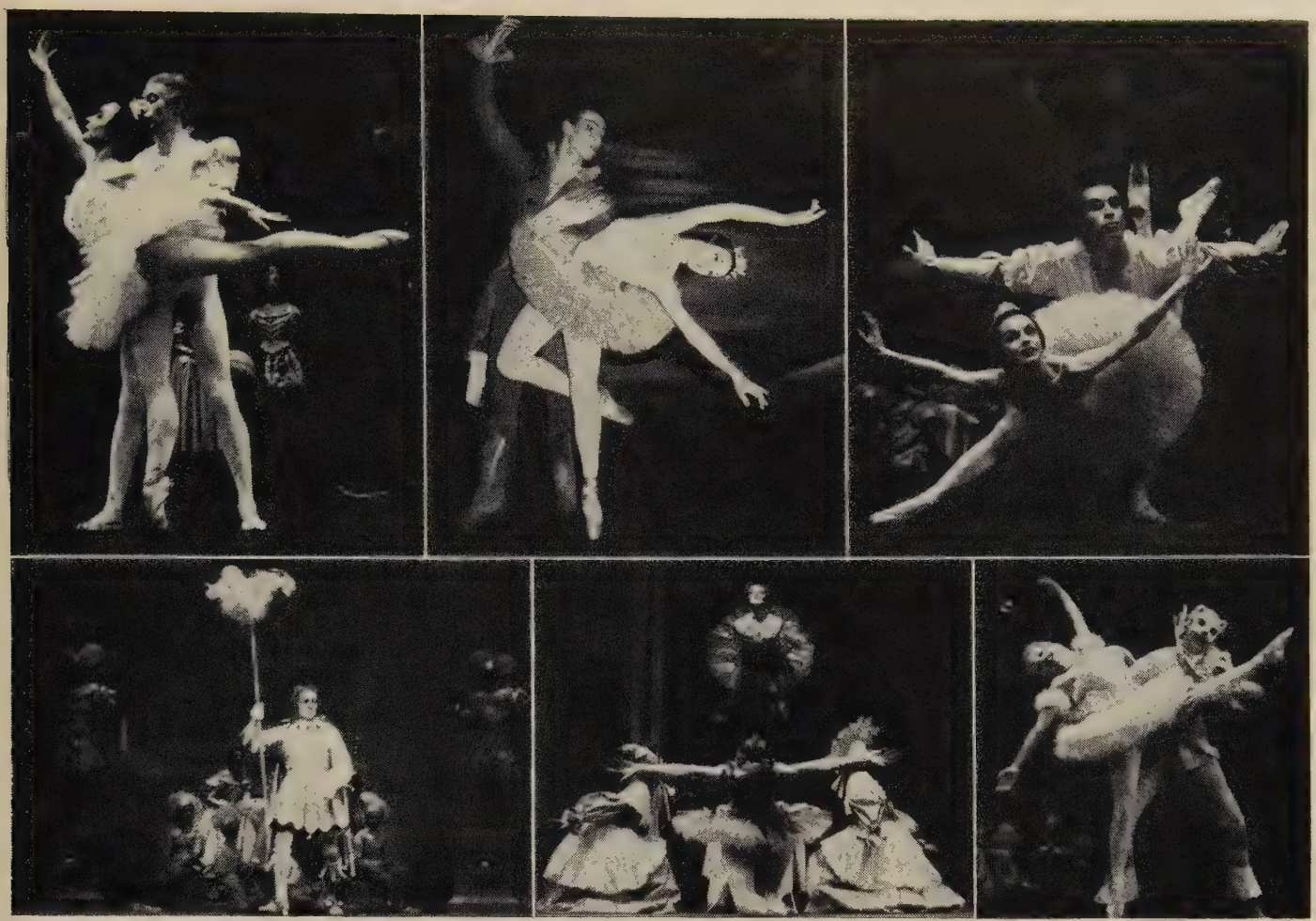
So far the senior company have yet to find a cast capable of measuring up to the old Theatre Ballet group who danced the work when it was first created. Both Maryon Lane and Annette Page have excelled, in very different ways, as the Polka girl, but neither matched the off-beat silliness and gawky *chic* of Sara Neil. Lane, neat and compact, has a natural feel for the nuances of MacMillan's choreography, and she danced beautifully. Yet her performance was too mature and brash, and she never once gave the impression of having stepped in, breathless but willing, from the pages of *Vogue*. Page played it differently, stressing the humorous, or perhaps better, whimsical aspect of the character, and despite her dancing being less well-defined than Lane's, she made a far stronger impression.

Donald Britton's original rôle has been played by both Brian Shaw and Pirmin Trecu. Shaw, classical, elegant, and as impeccable as a Savile Row suit, was quite wrong in the part — yet succeeded in being wrong with some distinction. Trecu, *demi-caractère*, vivacious and as casual as a suede jacket, was quite right in the part, although even his verve could not destroy the memory of Britton's bounce.

Trecu was also the best cast for the second boy — originally created by Michael Boulton — although here he was given a run for his money by Peter Clegg. Graham Usher, who had to undertake this part at short notice, was not at all satisfactory. Ronald Hynd and Desmond Doyle have alternated in the romantic *pas de deux*. Neither was up to the standard of Donald MacLeary, Hynd looking too sophisticated and worldly, Doyle — rather blank-faced — partnering with insufficient assurance. There have been two completely different *corps de ballets*, both being energetically adequate.

Desmond Heeley's set and costumes have distinctly suffered in their translation to the Upper House. The backcloth is now practically submerged in a kind of sepia wash, and the costumes look affrontedly jaded.

Clive Barnes.



STUTTGART'S SLEEPING BEAUTY: *Top row, Xenia Palley and Donald Barclay in the last act* pas de deux *(left). Estéban Cerda and Dulce Anaya in the Vision scene (middle), and the same two dancers in the "fish dive" in the last act. Bottom row: Nicholas Beriosov as Catallabutte (left). Gisela Erhardt as the Lilac Fairy (centre). Christl Gläske and Hasso Eriksen as the White Cat and Puss in Boots.* *Photos: Kurt Rebmann.*

'The Beauty' in Stuttgart

IT is impossible not to admire Nicholas Beriosov's courage in having chosen *The Sleeping Beauty* for his first Stuttgart production, for when he took over his duties as new ballet-master of the Stuttgart State Opera in autumn last year, he found a company of less than moderate quality. He has since reinforced it with a number of dancers from abroad, including Xenia Palley, Dulce Anaya. Donald Barclay, Estéban Cerda and Hugo Delavalle.

After no more than three months' preparation he made, just before Christmas, his *début* with a performance, which was, if not wholly satisfactory, nonetheless a remarkable achievement. *The Sleeping Beauty* was very warmly received by the public and up to now some twenty sold-out performances have followed the première, proving that German audiences appreciate full-length ballets.

The production, as far as I can see, closely follows the Covent Garden version, but for the fact that the first half of Act II is cut out, so that this part begins with the *entrée* of the Lilac Fairy.

Mrs. Bauer-Ecsy's sets were splendid and skilfully executed and the same may be said of most of the costumes. The lighting and the other technical devices were competent, the entire production giving evidence of efficient stage-craftsmanship.

So far so good; but everyone will agree that a ballet like *The Sleeping Beauty* calls for first quality dancing if it is to achieve its full effectiveness. In fact the first performance gave the impression that it had been too early to entrust an insufficiently trained and not yet homogeneous company with such a difficult task. Many of the solo variations of the prologue and the third act, as well as considerable parts of the group work, lacked precision and were far from radiant. It was regrettable, too, that the Garland Waltz had to be danced by young pupils from the Opera School, although, one must admit, these girls did their best.

Xenia Palley is an attractive dancer, who though possessing an appealing technical skill, seemed so preoccupied with the problems of *équilibre* in the Rose Adagio and at other times that her performance looked more like a technical display rather than the portrayal of a fairy-tale princess. Donald Barclay, a former member of the Royal Ballet, as Prince Florimund, showed nobility of line and good partnering, but missed the poetry of the rôle's conception. Anita Wirsch, as the Lilac Fairy, proved competent but rather cold.

There was, however, an unexpected highlight towards the end, with Dulce Anaya's and Hugo Delavalle's sparkling performance of the Blue Bird *pas de deux*. Anaya's virtuosity and Delavalle's brilliant elevation easily surpassed everyone and everything else.

Unfortunately the whole production was handicapped by the conductor. Wilhelm Seegelken, not showing much interest in what happened on the stage.

While aware of the shortcomings of this production, it is nevertheless possible to fully appreciate Beriosov's efforts, which certainly marked a milestone in the progress of the German ballet renaissance.

Some weeks after the première I saw another performance of *The Sleeping Beauty*. This time Estéban Cerda and Donald Barclay had exchanged their parts: Cerda's Florimund was interesting, his characterisation showed remarkable understanding of the part, while Barclay's Florestan variation was very notable.

After the première I had been inclined to think that Aurora is a rôle that no young dancer can master at her first attempt. This second performance made me change my mind, for Dulce Anaya's interpretation seemed pure delight. Heaven knows why this young ballerina is "second cast"! She appears to possess every gift I look for in a classical dancer: profound understanding of the music, brilliant technique, expressive *port de bras*, intelligence and personality. She also knows how to build up her rôle, although it was the wistful charm of her dancing in the Vision Scene that most endeared her to me. On another occasion I saw her dance scenes from *Les Sylphides* (Nocturne and the C-sharp minor Waltz) in a concert performance, again with Estéban Cerda as her reliable and distinguished partner. Her lyrical qualities enthralled a big audience — in spite of an inadequate stage, dreadful lighting and the total absence of any décor. She is a future ballerina whose name should be remembered. **Karl Viktor Prinz zu Wied.**

Jack of all Ballet Trades

by JOHN PERCIVAL

AS ALBRECHT: Blair in the second act of Covent Garden's Giselle.
Photo: Vivienne.

WHEN David Blair danced Harlequin in Fokine's *Carnaval,* he restored a technical trick from, I believe, the original production which no one else had succeeded in doing for years. During the *pirouettes* which end Harlequin's variation in the love scene with Columbine, he gradually bent the knee of his supporting leg so that he finished sitting cross-legged right down on the floor. A small thing in itself, but how much less ungainly it looked than dropping clumsily to the sitting position, as everybody else does, after they have stopped turning. The stylishness of Fokine's choreography was vindicated, and another little touch was revealed in the portrait of Harlequin's mercurial nature. And how typical it was of the brilliance of Blair's dancing and the perfection he has always aimed at in matters of technique.

It is typical of Blair, too, that he should also have played Pantalon in this ballet. There could hardly be two rôles in one ballet more different from each other. The one is sprightly, young, mocking and admired; the other stiff, middle-aged and ridiculous. Harlequin calls for a virtuoso technique, Pantalon demands a first-rate mime and almost no dancing. Blair was seventeen when he played Pantalon; his make-up was poor and he did not look at all the right age; but I think I have seen no one else in the Royal Ballet convey the fussy pomposity of the character with more assurance or less exaggeration.

Jack of all trades, they say, is master of none, and in ballet there is an added reason for specialisation in that there is a physical basis for the classification of dancers into types — noble or heroic, *demi-caractère* and character. Blair transcends the rules and remains unclassifiable. He has tackled, with success, every type of rôle in the repertory and, during the ten years since his career began, he has learned and danced an average of at least one new part every two months.

With the former Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, Blair danced important rôles almost from the beginning and was a principal dancer in his 'teens after only three years' experience. For this kind of rise, as for his amazing range of parts, there is only one explanation: a combination of unusual natural ability with sheer hard work.

To appreciate just what it entailed, consider one representative year, from September 1950 to September 1951. Blair was then one of an exceptional group which included Poole, Trecu, Beriosova, Fifield, Miller and Lane. The year began with the creation of Balanchine's *Trumpet Concerto,* a *jeu d'esprit* which fell flat because of an unsuitable *décor,* unworthy orchestral playing and singularly inept performances from some of the dancers, but Blair, as spruce and alert as a toy soldier, gave a valiantly assured interpretation of the leading male rôle, crisp and musical.

After this inauspicious beginning, the company had one of its finest seasons. The next three months saw the creation of three first-rate ballets by Cranko; Ninette de Valois mounted *The Prospect Before Us;* and the Theatre Ballet added two big classical works to its repertory, *Coppélia* and Ashton's new version of *Casse Noisette.* In all of these Blair had important rôles and, in dancing them, he developed from a promising young dancer into an artist of genuine interpretative ability.

Already his technique was well-formed, and both Cranko and Ashton gave him show-stopping variations which exercised to the full his facility for *pirouettes* and *tours en l'air.* As Damon in *Pastorale,* looking every inch the self-confident lover, he also showed a flair for witty comedy with no hint of burlesque or buffoonery; and as the Nutcracker Prince he partnered with an elegance which matched the crisp speed of his solo dancing.

In *Coppélia* we saw the first sketch of a portrait which Blair has since developed into an almost definitive study. From the beginning his Frantz had an appropriate cocky swagger and extrovert high spirits, shown in a host of minor details. Many of the little touches he introduced (such as Frantz's "hearing" the proof of his love in the ear of corn which has been silent to Swanilda and everyone else) have since been adopted by other dancers, but Blair's characterisation in this rôle seems so inevitable, so unfailingly right, that it remains the best to be seen today. Similarly his neat *batterie,* his perfectly timed *pirouettes* and impetuous *jetés en tournant* leave him without an equal in the last act variation and coda. When he danced this ballet recently with Helpmann as Dr. Coppélius, he gave the scene-stealing guest artist as good as he got, without ever stepping outside the ballet's dramatic content. His whirling right round with the long ladder over one shoulder, and the drunken good humour with which he invited Coppélius to accompany him to Coppélia's room were just two of many delightful touches he introduced.

AT SADLER'S WELLS: Left, as Captain Belaye in Cranko's Pineapple Poll, *the rôle in which he achieved eminence and in which he has never been surpassed. Right, as the Rake in the final scene of de Valois'* The Rake's Progress. *Photos: Denis de Marney.*

But in that early Theatre Ballet season, in spite of the brilliance of his performances in the works already mentioned, and his effective creation of the title rôle in *Harlequin in April,* Blair's biggest success was in the other new Cranko ballet, *Pineapple Poll.* No one who saw him as Captain Belaye can have forgotten the superb arrogance with which he commanded his crew, nor the smooth finish he imparted even to the vigorous horn-pipe. Of course Belaye is one of those foolproof rôles in which nobody of any talent whatever can really flop, but it seems to have broadened a lot since Blair left the smaller company. It was in this rôle, too, that Blair mastered the art of characterisation through dancing which has since made him a notable Rake and also the Royal Ballet's best Can-Can dancer in *La Boutique Fantasque* — as lithe and supple as the "boneless" 19th century dancer who inspired the creation of the rôle.

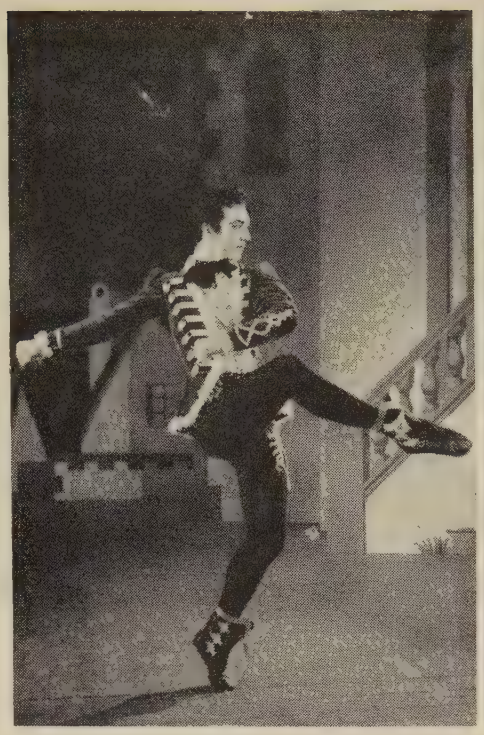
Blair was transferred to Covent Garden as a soloist in the summer of 1953. That his talents were not overlooked in the larger company is shown by the fact that by March 1954 he was dancing Frantz in the first performance of the new production of *Coppélia.* But again his work may best be appreciated by looking in detail at just one period of twelve months which saw his début in all the long 19th century *danseur noble* rôles.

The year I am thinking of certainly began with a rush, and the facts alone are impressive enough. On January 14, 1956, Blair danced Daphnis for the first (and so far the only) time. Exactly one week later he danced his first full *Swan Lake* and within a month had added his first *Cinderella* and *Sleeping Beauty.*

Not surprisingly, his characterisations were at first incomplete and, in some cases, grotesquely misconceived: his princes tended to be jolly boys on good terms with everyone. But if there was much to be forgiven in this respect for the sake of his inexperience in such rôles, Blair's dancing and partnering were enough to put any audience in a mood to be generous.

Violetta Elvin, whom Blair partnered in each of these big roles, never had a partner who suited her better. With other dancers she had sometimes looked a little heavy: Blair lifted her to the full stretch of his arms with her back arched, Bolshoi-fashion, and showed that her Moscow training had simply been awaiting a dancer with the temperament and talent to harmonize with her. They shared the same flamboyant approach to a *grand pas de deux,* a quality of magnificently lavish display, and it was a particular delight, during Elvin's last season with the Royal Ballet, to see her set off to such good advantage by a partner who provided the perfect foil to her very feminine charm.

The Black Swan *pas de deux* in the third act of *Swan Lake* was their greatest triumph together, and it also gave Blair the opportunity for the most dazzling revelation to date of his prowess in a classical solo. He has, together with John Gilpin, the best all-round technique of any Englishman dancing today, and in spite of dancing in a specially revised and supercharged version of the variation he makes it look almost easy. Now that, with experience and time for thought, he is adding to his performances in those ballets a more noble bearing and a more consistently developed dramatic feeling, he is rapidly making them into fully rounded interpretations with the various elements of acting, musicianship, stagecraft and skill in partnering and dancing perfectly related.



AT COVENT GARDEN : Left, as Frantz, in the last act variation from the most recent production of Coppélia. *Photo : Baron.*
Right, in the title rôle from Cranko's three-act ballet, The Prince of the Pagodas, *which is Blair's most recent created rôle. Photo : Tony Armstrong Jones.*

In that spring of 1956 when he first danced them, however, there was little time for consolidation. There was his first Albrecht to follow, again with Elvin, again beautifully danced, and this time with a clear conception of the character from the very beginning. Then came the creation of *Birthday Offering,* in which Blair participated prominently in the brief, surging ensemble, which became the symbol of the new position of the male dancer in English ballet.

Blair's next rôle was the lead in *Symphonic Variations.* Like his earlier solitary performance of Daphnis, this was far from being an unqualified success. In these two rôles (as in many others, but here more markedly than usual) Ashton has created parts to exploit Somes's lyrical qualities. Despite the poetic understanding Blair showed in the Grigorieffs' new production of *Les Sylphides,* he has not so far developed an equivalent poetic approach of his own for these more modern ballets. His Daphnis was too natural, too realistic, and the symbolic seduction by Lykanion became squalid in consequence. Also the very gentle style of dancing needed for this rôle seemed to elude him. In *Symphonic Variations* he danced well, but does not seem yet to have apprehended the emotional progression which is the secret of this ballet's mastery.

To complete a very full year's work for Blair came *The Prince of the Pagodas.* The unexplained and inadequately motivated transformations from Prince to Salamander left little chance of real characterisation, but Blair gave pathos to the beast's discomfiture at the end of the second act. He also partnered handsomely, and danced with real dash. There is probably nothing more characteristic of his solo dancing than his brief entry in the finale: a swift, flying circuit of the stage, a flurry of fast *pirouettes,* a stunning *double tour en l'air* ending on one knee — and then a broad smile to suggest that it was all rather easy or, if not easy, at least fun.

Blair, who comes from Yorkshire, remarked to me that: "North country people like to show off." There is a large element of showing off in Blair's dancing, and in his early days he sometimes seemed far too fond of applause, but now this quality is tempered by a disarmingly humorous awareness of what he is doing, which prevents any suggestion of conceit. Also, there is never any attempt on his part to score at his ballerina's expense. On the contrary, he adapts himself in a remarkable way to his partners. He has danced leading rôles, for instance, with Fonteyn, Markova, Elvin, Nerina, Beriosova and Fifield among others, and despite the widely varying styles of these ballerinas, he has fitted well with each of them.

Both where Blair now stands as a dancer, and how far he still has to go, were shown in one of his latest rôles, the lead in *Ballet Imperial.* No one has danced the short third-movement solo so well as he, making of its bounding leaps a single coherent whole. No one has partnered better than he, with more skill or more feeling. And only one dancer has walked more impressively on and off the stage at the beginning and end of the second movement. But how crucial this walk is, and what a world of difference there is between the way Blair does it and the way Somes did it. Blair is, of all the dancers in this part, undoubtedly the nearest to Somes: there is dignity in his bearing, and simplicity, and when he raises his arm it is already an expression of sadness, not just a striking pose. There is not yet in his performance, however, the nobility and the grandeur which Somes imparted, the sense both of the privilege and of the obligations attendant upon the heir to a great tradition. If Blair can add these to his work, he will be ready to succeed, as seems likely in the course of time, to Michael Somes's rightful position as the natural leader of the Royal Ballet company.

FESTIVAL HATCH: Belinda Wright, former ballerina of London's Festival Ballet, with her son Christopher, who was born in the middle of March. Belinda hopes to return to ballet soon. Her husband, Wolfang Brunner, will continue as a choreographer, his most recent work being for Western Theatre Ballet. Photo: Ken Ross-Mackenzie.

FESTIVAL MATCH: Anthony Gilpin, brother of John Gilpin and stage manager of Festival Ballet, leaving Holy Trinity, Kingsway, with his bride Diane Westerman, who is a soloist in the company. Their London wedding was held on April 10 and a three-day honeymoon was spent in Anton Dolin's villa in Monte Carlo before the pair joined their company in Paris for its season there. Photo: Grosvenor Studios.

curtain up!

Not sent to Coventry

LONDON's Festival Ballet has certainly been in the news lately. Not only because of their success at the Paris Festival but also through their association with the unfortunately cancelled performance of music and ballet in the ruins of Coventry Cathedral.

For the company this would have meant giving up the whole of the first Sunday of their Festival Hall season—a very generous gesture from hard-working artists. I hear that the performance was expected to raise no less than £20,000 towards the cost of the new Cathedral.

According to its present composition the Lord's Day Observance Society, whose intervention led to the cancellation, had every right to invoke the law. But if that is how they honestly feel they are not really consistent as there are many things I can think of which happen on the Sabbath that are more worthy of their attention than stopping great artists giving their services to a most honourable cause. What is really provoking, however, is the officiously authoritative tone some of the Society's representatives adopted. One even went so far as to declare that "The Almighty is not flattered or pleased when man offers his arts". I wonder how *he* knows.

Anyway, the whole unhappy incident is not unlikely to bring about a renewed attempt at changing the existing legislation. In the end this may, in the long run, benefit organisations like the Sunday Ballet Club.

The Bolshoi learns from us

WHEN I met Madame Bocharnikova, director of the Bolshoi Theatre Ballet School, recently in London, she was still awaiting the opportunity to see the Royal Ballet School at work. I am glad to say that this was arranged before she returned to Moscow and I hear that Dame Ninette herself took the senior class on this occasion. Apparently a number of the Royal Ballet's principal dancers also gave excerpts from various ballets. It is indeed flattering that the Bolshoi, despite their experience, are willing to take the trouble to learn from us — if only we could do the same from them!

Free to males

WHEN the ballet historian Ivor Guest, who has often contributed to the pages of DANCE AND DANCERS, recently went on a part-business trip to Rhodesia, he hoped that he would get away from all thought of ballet at least for a few weeks. On arrival in Salisbury he found that the local ballet enthusiasts had organised a cocktail party to welcome him and, like most of us, he was happy to forget that he had really intended to escape.

He was pressed into giving a lecture on the *Traditions of Ballet* at the inaugural function of the Salisbury Ballet Club on March 26. This club has been organised by the Salisbury Ballet Teachers' Association and it intends to give lectures and evenings covering all aspects of ballet's art — later there will be performances. On this occasion various dancers, including Pamela Darke, gave excerpts from classical ballets. One innovation introduced by the club is for males to get free tuition, which seems to me to be an admirable way of encouraging that rare creature — the male dancer.

The first Honorary President of the club is Svetlana Beriosova; surely an ideal choice for a young country starting to become interested in the art of ballet.

Workshop in Paris

BOLSTERED up by the results, though hardly the financial success, of the various experimental ballet groups in England, Paris is now turning its hand to this most valuable and vital contribution to the art of ballet. Under the patronage of the Minister of National Education, an organisation known as Le Théâtre d'Essai de la Danse gave an evening of ballet at the Théâtre de l'Apollo on April 22.

A number of choreographers tried their hand at creating new works which were danced by a number of distinguished young artists. The evening was a great success but the undoubted triumph of the whole affair was supplied by an Englishman. Deryk Mendel revived his *Epithalame*, with which he won the first prize at the International Choreographic Competition at Aix-les-Bains last year. There is every possibility that Britain will get a chance of seeing this notable work as there is a rumour that the Ballet Rambert will take it into its repertoire for its London season at Sadler's Wells in September.

When the Marquis de Cuevas heard about the evening of ballet he postponed his departure for Barcelona with his company in order to attend the performance. He also gave 20,000 francs towards buying flowers for the artists — a charming and generous gesture.

Very misleading

IN the past, I have had cause to haul Covent Garden over the coals for the mistakes in their ballet programmes. But the coals are not really hot enough to haul them over for what has been happening lately. For the first press matinee of the second cast of *Solitaire*, the entirely female *corps de ballet* of six was wrongly listed. On another occasion, James Bailey's designs for *Giselle* were attributed to Peter Rice, who actually designed the other Royal Ballet's *Giselle*. The order of the programme, when Rowena Jackson danced her first *Giselle*, read as follows: *The Shadow* — Interval — *Giselle* Act I — Interval — *Giselle* Act II — Interval. Considering *Giselle* was the last ballet on the programme, this amounted to the longest wait in ballet history.

There is possibly a good reason for these mistakes, but considering many people keep

their programmes for historical reference and critics often have to compose their notices based on the information supplied in the programme, the result could cause a great deal of confusion. When the Opera House celebrates its centenary this month, it could well bring out a volume correcting all the programme mistakes that have been made since the war.

General Post

THERE has been quite a shuffling around amongst British choreographers recently. When Britten's *The Prince of the Pagodas* was mounted in Munich a month or so ago, the choreography was not by John Cranko, who created it for Covent Garden, but by another British choreographer, who is also ballet master there, Alan Carter. I understand that Carter has a great success with his first three-act work. Instead of going to Munich, John Cranko is now in Milan and will mount Stravinsky's *Agon* at the Teatro alla Scala. This is a last-minute change-about because Kenneth MacMillan was originally scheduled to put on the Stravinsky ballet there. However, owing to some difficulties about the contract and the designer, MacMillan cried off. But the Scala's loss might well turn out to be Covent Garden's gain, because Dame Ninette de Valois has invited MacMillan to mount *Agon* for Royal Ballet (I). With a setting and costumes by Nicholas Georgiadis this will have its première at Covent Garden during the August season.

But it is not only choreographers who are on the move, because Fonteyn and Somes are to dance in Istanbul and Ankara, while Beriosova and Ashbridge went to dance with Royal Ballet (II) in Belfast at a gala during the visit of the Queen Mother. Then Beriosova and Chatfield left for Stuttgart to appear in her father's production of *The Sleeping Beauty*. In July Beriosova and Blair, together with a Royal Ballet group, will dance at performances in honour of Cecchetti at the Nervi Festival in Genoa. If these and other Royal Ballet stars are going to appear all over the world, you might well ask, which foreign guest star is going to appear at Covent Garden? Answer: Yvette Chauviré.

Grey across the river

NOT much has been heard of Beryl Grey since she returned from Russia, apart from some television appearances and her many notable lectures about the ballet in Russia. However, you will be hearing quite a lot about her soon because she will be dancing in London again. She will not be returning to her old company in Covent Garden but on the other side of the Thames in Festival Hall. She is to appear as a guest ballerina with London's Festival Ballet during its forthcoming season. She will lead the company for one part of the season while Alicia Markova, who had some previous commitments before she rejoined Festival Ballet, will lead it for the other part of the season.

BALLET STAMP: Here is a Russian stamp, the first ever to show a scene from a ballet. It is one of three stamps issued in March to mark the first of the International Tchaikovsky Competitions for Pianists and Violinists, now to be an annual affair. The wording across the top reads: "The Great Russian Composer P. I. Tchaikovsky." In the decorative panel on the left are the words, "The ballet Swan Lake".

Stone returns to ballet

FOR some years now Paddy Stone has been known as part of a brilliant trio of dancers who have brought great distinction to the lighter musical stage. Together with Beryl Kaye and Irving Davies he has appeared in cabaret, on films and television. He has also done quite a lot of choreography but, apart from a work he did a few years ago for the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Stone has not created anything for a major ballet company. Now Festival Ballet have invited him to create a work which they will give at the Festival of Nervi in July. This ballet, as yet untitled, has music arranged by Robert Farnon and is designed by a young architect-designer from Glasgow, Jack Notman.

I wonder how many people remember Paddy Stone as a dancer with the Royal Ballet? He joined the company when it was first transferred to Covent Garden, and his strong technique and manly style made him a valuable acquisition during his brief stay with the company.

Ondine at last

AFTER delays and postponements, I hear that Frederick Ashton's *Ondine* is likely to open the Royal Ballet autumn season at Covent Garden. Although the postponements have been worrying to some people, I feel that Ashton was perfectly right not to put on such a formidable work until he was absolutely sure that it was as he wanted it.

Recently, Tamara Karsavina gave a fascinating talk on the BBC about the interest of the story and the opportunities it gives for unusual scenic and choreographic effects. I was delighted to hear of her enthusiasm for Ashton's work and her conviction that he would do justice to the occasion. How welcome is Karsavina's attitude because although she has a vast knowledge of an earlier period of ballet, she has never adopted the attitude of "Ah, but you should have seen so-and-so". Her ready welcome of new developments is as refreshing as it is gratifying.

Eastward bound

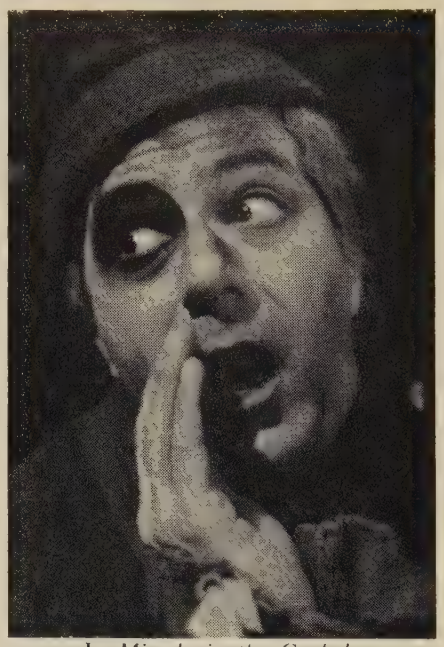
TO Teheran in May went Dame Ninette de Valois at the invitation of the Persian-Iranian Government. The object was to investigate the possibilities of opening a ballet school there on the lines of the Royal Ballet School. De Valois has also been to Ankara and Istanbul to see how the schools run by Molly Lake and Travis Kemp were getting on.

TO Baalbeck in July goes Ballet Rambert to be the first British ballet company to appear in the Lebanon. At last year's Baalbeck Festival the Old Vic Theatre company had such a success that it was thought that this year it would be a good idea to follow this with an English ballet company.

TO New Zealand will go ex-Royal Ballet dancers Walter Trevor and Sara Neil. They are giving up dancing and will open a ballet school in Wellington, which is Neil's birthplace. Their daughter Janine was born last February.

Birthdays will be found on page 38.

Dancer of Today



In *Miracle in the Gorbals.*
Photo: Roy Round.

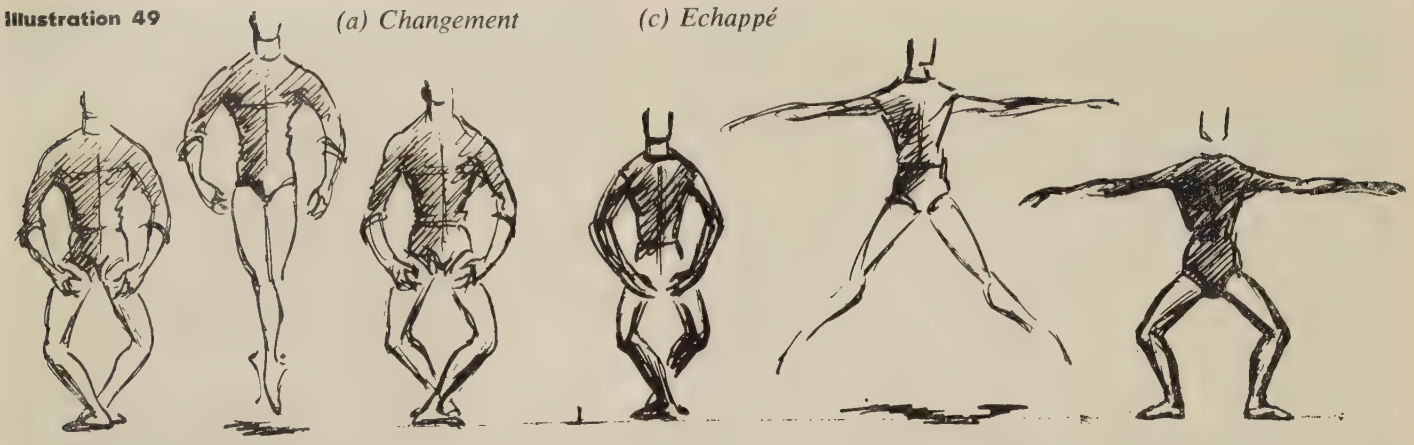
LESLIE EDWARDS

Born in Teddington, Middlesex, in 1916. Studied principally with Marie Rambert, but made his debut at Sadler's Wells in Ruper Doone's The Enchanted Grove *in 1933. Later he danced with the Ballet Rambert, but eventually he returned to the Royal Ballet, and apart from a break for war service, has remained with the company ever since.*
Creations include: Arthur in A Wedding Bouquet; *Archimago in* The Quest; *Beggar in* Miracle in the Gorbals; *Spiritual Adviser in* Adam Zero; *Chauffeur in* Les Sirènes; *King in* Clock Symphony; *King in* Donald of the Burthens; *Bilby in* A Miracle for Witches; *Hypnotist in* Noctambules; *King in* Prince of the Pagodas; *Rôles include (for Rambert) Lover in* Jardin aux Lilas; *Personage in* Les Masques; *(for Royal Ballet) Hilarion in* Giselle; *Benno and Rothbart in* Swan Lake; *Cattalbutte and Carabosse in* Sleeping Beauty; *Dr. Coppélius and Burgomaster in* Coppélia; *Florestan in* Carnaval; *Merchant in* Petrushka; *Rake, etc., in* The Rake's Progress; *Red King in* Checkmate; *Don Quixote in* Don Quixote; *Foxtrot in* Façade; *American in* La Boutique Fantasque; *Corregidor in* The Three-Cornered Hat; *Ghost in* Hamlet.

ALTHOUGH in the strict nominal sense Leslie Edwards is not a star, he is without question one of the most distinguished artists in British ballet. He, more than anyone else, shows how remarkably useful the slightly older dancer can be to a large national company, and the tragedy is that we do not have many more of his type.

The list of his successes is as impressive as almost any to be found in the company, and he has excelled in the small thumb-nail sketch which British dancers normally appear to find so difficult. His Hilarion must be accounted among the best Covent Garden characterisations, and in many other rôles, including Dr. Coppélius, he is showing an ever-increasing authority.

Illustration 49 *(a) Changement* *(c) Echappé*



STEPS OF THE DANCE 31

by

BARBARA VERNON *and* JOHN GREGORY

Illustrated by EILEAN PEARCEY

CENTRE-WORK : ALLEGRO

JETE (to throw) : Is a jump from one leg to the other. I deal here with the small *Jeté* steps; *Grands Jetés* will be dealt with in the section devoted to big steps. From *plié* in 5th position the working leg slides out with a pressure into the floor to the *en l'air* position. As the working leg stretches the supporting leg pushes from the floor, and the weight of the body is transferred to the working leg which lands *en plié:* The leg from which the jump was taken is brought into *cou de pied* position. The arms will be used as described for *Assemblés.*

JETE DERRIERE : Standing in 5th position *en plié,* the back leg slides out to the side as supporting leg pushes from the floor. In the air both legs are stretched. With the landing *en plié* on the working leg, the other leg is brought in to *cou de pied* back. With the jump the arms may open from 1st position forward to 2nd position and open to 4th position; or commencing with both arms in 4th position the arm corresponding to the working leg is carried rounded to 2nd position.

JETE DEVANT: As previously described, but in this case the front leg makes the *Jeté,* and as it lands the other leg is brought in to *cou de pied* front. Both arms open to 4th position; or arm related to the forward leg in 2nd position.

PETIT JETE WITHOUT BRUSHING LEG (Sometimes called running *Jetés)* Standing on one leg, with back leg in *cou de pied.* From *plié* supporting leg pushes from the floor. As both legs straighten in the air, the back leg passes forward to land *en plié,* while the other leg closes *cou de pied* behind. When performing a series arms may be held in 1st position, or more conveniently in 4th position.

JETE FERME (Fully described in Article 28) : Is like a *Jeté devant* or *derrière,* but the leg from which the *Jeté* is sprung, instead of closing to *cou de pied,* closes in 5th position. The step is similar to a *Glissade,* but instead of gliding along the floor it is sprung into the air with both legs stretched wide apart. Though usually performed to the side, it may travel in all directions.

EMBOITE EN TOURNANT : Is a jump from two legs on to one leg, and thence from one leg to the other leg, turning a half-turn with each jump. Commencing from 5th position, *en croisé* the jump is sprung out of a supple *plié* on to the front leg, with the working leg being picked up sharply to *cou de pied devant.* It is a vertical movement, and with each jump the *cou de pied* leg steps "down into the air" as it were, before landing *en plié.* The arms commence: front arm in 2nd position, other arm in 4th position. With the first spring on to front leg with half-turn, corresponding arm opens to 4th position, other arm follows to 2nd position. With second spring completing turn the arms revert to starting position. Head spots in direction of travel.

JETE WITH DEMIE-TOUR EN DEHORS : Similar to the *Emboité* with the exception that instead of the vertical "step-down" of the working leg from *cou de pied* to the floor, the leg is thrown out in the normal *Jeté* movement.

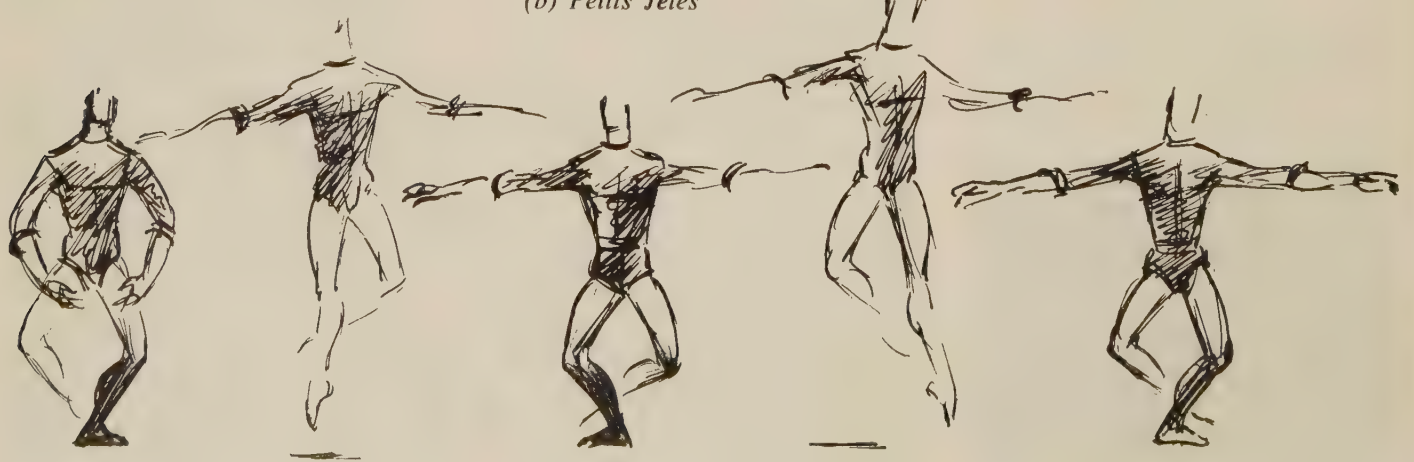
JETE WITH DEMIE-TOUR EN DEDANS : This step is best described in two parts. Commencing 5th position *en plié,* back leg makes *Jeté* with half-turn towards supporting leg, which is immediately picked up to *cou de pied* behind. To accomplish this second half-turn it is necessary to swivel *en plié* towards the back leg simultaneously turning out the *cou de pied* leg before it is thrown in *Jeté en avant,* to land *en plié* with the back leg closing *cou de pied* behind. The arms commence forward, arm in 2nd position, other arm in 4th position, with the first *Jeté* 4th position arm is brought in to 2nd position other arm opens to 4th position; with the second *Jeté,* original forward arm is lowered from 4th position and opens to 2nd position, other arm opening again to 4th position.

The *Emboités* and the *Jetés en tournants* may travel *en diagonal* or circularly.

JETE BATTU : In which the supporting leg is lifted to strike the working leg when it is fully stretched at the height of the jump. The actual beat is made by the hitting together of the calves. For correct execution and to give the impression of lightness it is essential that the supporting leg be lifted up to the working leg and not vice versa. The legs meet in the air in the same relationship as they began; they change this relationship after the beat; the leg which made the beat passing beside the other leg to the *cou de pied* position.

CHANGEMENT : A jump from 5th position straight up into the air. From *plié*

(b) Petits Jetés



the legs push from the floor and in the air are completely stretched beneath the body. At the height of the jump the legs change places; front leg passing to the back, back leg simultaneously passing to the front. The landing is *en plié*. In *Allegro* the *changement* is usually a small jump of no great elevation. It is important that the heels shall be firmly on the ground in the *plié*.

SOUTENU EN TOURNANT (Detourné) (Fully described in Barre-work Article 7, and in Adage Articles 17 and 18). A turning movement *en dehors* or *en dedans* in which the working leg is brought in to 5th position *en demie-pointe*, and the body smoothly turning on straight legs. In the course of the turn the working leg which closed in front becomes the back leg! or vice versa the working leg which closed behind becomes the front leg. The *soutenu* finishes *en plié* if it is linked with another step.

ECHAPPE (Described in Adage Article 21). From 5th position *en plié* a spring straight up into the air at the height of the jump the stretched legs are opened apart, and the landing is made on both legs in an open position *en plié*; the weight of the body equally distributed between the two legs. From the open position the legs again push from the floor, and stretch fully in the air before landing in 5th position *en plié*. The arms open with the *échappé* from

(d) Emboités

1st position forwards to 2nd and out to 4th position. With the closing jump the arms are lowered to 1st position. May be performed with or without change of leg.

EXAMPLES OF ALLEGRO ENCHAINEMENTS INCORPORATING JETES

	Counts
(1) *Glissade derrière*	And 1,
Jeté derrière	„ 2,
Assemblé dessus	„ 3,
Changement de pied	„ 4.
Repeat on other side.	
(2) *Glissade derrière, Changement*	„ 1 and 2,
Glissade devant, Changement	„ 3 „ 4,
Jeté derrière, Jeté derrière	And 1 and 2,
Assemblé dessus	„ 3.
Repeat on other side.	
(3) *Glissade derrière*	„ 1,
Jeté derrière	„ 2,
Coupé dessous	„ 3,
Assemblé dessous	„ 4,
Echappé à la seconde	„ 5,
Sauté to 5th position	„ 6.
Repeat on other side.	
(4) *Glissade derrière*	„ 1,
2 *Petits Jetés derrières*	„ 2,
Glissade derrière	„ 3,
Assemblé dessus	„ 4.
Repeat on other side.	

Foreign Affairs

NEW BOOKS

La Vie de Nijinsky, by Françoise Reiss. (Plon, Paris.)

NIJINSKY was undoubtedly one of the most vivid personalities of ballet. Crushed in full flight by madness, his life has become a legend bound to the Ballet Russes, although he parted from the Diaghilev company as early as 1913 and only returned to it during the war for spasmodic performances in America and Spain. Through his life he was the subject of many biographies — the most famious, if not the most impartial, being that by his wife, Romola Nijinsky.

...In her turn, Françoise Reiss has been attracted by the unusual personality of this "man-bird" who so impressed his contemporaries from Rodin to Anna de Noailles. Though she was unable to see him dance herself, she has been fascinated by his art and has gathered together the most bedazzled testimony. Taking her material from the accounts of some and the writings of others (Bourman in particular, Jacques Rivière and the Paris critics), she has now reconstructed the brief career which led from the Maryinsky Theatre to Saint Moritz, through the cruel trials leading up to his death in London on April 8, 1950.

More of a portrait than a miniature biography, this sincere work is full of interest and gives at length the words and the evidence of Valentine Hugo, Alexandre Benois, Michel Larionov and others. She also places more importance on the rôle of Nijinsky as a choreographer than has generally been awarded. Mlle. Reiss explains her approach in a second volume, *Nijinsky ou la grâce, Esthétique et Psychologie*, which was in fact a University thesis which she submitted to the Sorbonne in 1956. In turn she analyses the artistry, psychology and religious ideas of Nijinsky. Is this almost super-human personality which she presents to us authentic? It would be difficult to sustain this thesis without enthusiasm. Françoise Reiss, however, certainly does not lack this. indeed it is perhaps this enthusiasm that sometimes runs away with her.

It is reported that the biographical volume of these studies will appear in an English edition published by A. & C. Black.

Marie-Françoise Christout.

We danced as Apes

World History of the Dance, by Curt Sachs. (George Allen & Unwin Ltd. $6.00.)

THIS is by no means a light book — indeed, I know of few dance books weighing heavier. It is an impressive tome, an impressive subject and most gratifyingly an impressive treatment. Since this version was first published in 1937 it has become a classic of dance literature, and this re-issue, in Bessie Schönberg's original translation, is a timely and valuable publication, making generally available a work far too long out of print. I say "generally available" with some misgivings, for although it bears the publisher's imprint of George Allen & Unwin, London, it was printed in the U.S.A., and the dust-jacket has on it the ominous price of $6.00. So whether one can easily buy this in England I am not quite sure.

Sachs has gone into his task with a scholar's zeal — classifying, codifying, explaining and analysing. It is altogether a wonderful and remarkable achievement, tracing the dance from its first stirring in pre-history right up to the social dances of the first part of our present century. Sachs has quite a lot — as he deftly proves his contentions dodging nimbly from one reference to the next — of the scholarly perception to be found in Fraser's *The Golden Bough*. It may, however, be felt that he devotes too little space and study to the Oriental dance, but this possible lack of emphasis is merely a very minor blemish on a major work.

In some respects the connections between a book such as this and ballet as we know it is slight indeed, but for anyone more interested in the Dance than in the Dancers, it must be regarded as absolutely essential reading. Those, on the other hand, who have their eyes glassily fixed on the stars, may be interested in this little quotation: "The origins of human dancing, however, are not revealed to us either in ethnology or pre-history. We must rather infer them from the Dance of the Apes; the gay, lively circle dance about some tall, firmly-fixed object must have come down to man from his animal ancestors."

C. B.

Germany's revival in pictures

Ballet in Deutschland, by S. Enkelmann. (Rembrandt Verlag, Berlin, DM.16.80.)

MANY anxious binoculars are today being focused upon Germany's ballet revival. This country with hardly any ballet tradition behind it, yet an abundance of facilities in the way of subsidies and theatres, is quietly but steadily making up lost ground. This is the second volume of photographs of German ballet to be produced by S. Enkelmann, who quite clearly is a photographer of the very first rank.

There is also a fairly long and discursive commentary in German by Horst Koegler, who in the course of a plea for a German national ballet briefly summarises that country's recent dance activity. (British readers may be intrigued to learn, incidentally, that Alan Carter's "ballet vocabulary is a somewhat old-fashioned Oxford English".)

Koegler's earnestness and Enkelmann's lush photos combine together to give a picture to the unknowledgable outsider like myself of the German ballet frantically struggling to be — you know — "modern" and yet still carrying with it a great deal of the expressionism that was apparently so much a feature of the pre-Hitler German dance scene. Soon Germany will have to find a place on the itinerary of every well brought-up young man's *Grand Tour de la Ballet*, and this beautifully produced book will do much to whet his appetite.

C. B.

So You Want To Dance?

Schools and Teachers
by E. C. MASON

"Anna" of West Street

Known to dancers all over the world as "Anna", Anna Northcote has, for seventeen years, been mainly responsible for making West Street almost synonymous with dance teaching.

BETWEEN 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. in a largish studio in West Street off Cambridge Circus, and close by a church hall in which John Wesley once preached, ballet classes are in progress every day of the week. This is Anna Northcote's studio. And of all the studios in London, for me this particular one gives out the most atmosphere. Perhaps this is because it has had 17 years in which to assume its ballet personality, for Anna Northcote has been teaching in it since 1941.

Dancers all over Europe regard it as Londons' equivalent of the celebrated Salle Wacker of Place Clichy in Paris — though it is a little less busy now that Anna Northcote no longer has either Volkova or Goncharov teaching in the studio directly above her. Nevertheless, dancers from all over the world and in an incredible variety of utilitarian costumes attend her classes.

To the question: "Who goes there?", the answer is truly "Everyone" — whether as permanent or only occasional pupils. Gilpin, Beriosova, Toni Lander, Elvin was there for many months from the time she first arrived in England, and the very young Beryl Grey too, Sonia Arova, Krassovska, Margit Muller, Domini Callaghan and Michel de Lutry, Marina Svetlova, Violette Verdy, Brian Shaw and Flemming Flindt, while during their visits to London one could find Roland Petit and Renée Jeanmaire in the middle of a private lesson.

I don't think that I have ever heard her termed "Miss Northcote", for every professional dancer knows her as "Anna". But this familiar trading of her Christian name does not seem to have brought her any less respect, and there are few dancers who have not had one of her "good luck and *au revoir*" kisses bestowed on them at some point of their career.

Naturally enough, teaching even the most brilliant dancers can be frustrating if they are only in London for a few days or weeks. Consequently, while the training or "polishing" of professional dancers is her main concern, she is just as interested in her permanent students and, especially, in the children whom she has trained from the very beginning who attend each Saturday and late afternoons after school hours.

Professional background

Only a minority of the teachers in this country have had professional stage experience. But Anna Northcote's professional background is, I consider, her strong suit. She danced with the Dandré-Levitoff company in 1934-35, which was first led by Vera Nemchinova, Obouhkoff and Zvereff. Nemchinova left and Spessitzeva and Vilzak became the principal artists. Fokine rehearsed all his own works while Alexandra Feodorova reproduced the classics. Many well-known dancers were in this company. In the *Valse Noble* in *Carnaval* her partner happened to be the very young George Zoritch. The Company's tour covered South Africa, the East Indies and Malaya, Australia, India, Ceylon and Egypt.

She next appeared with the Ballet Russe de Paris in England and on the Continent where she danced with Vilzak, Krassovska, Stroganova and Slavinsky. Her stage career was broken by the outbreak of war and the last company she danced with was the De Basil Ballet Russe. For this company she danced under the then obligatory and assumed name of Anna Severskaya, which was actually a direct Russian translation of her own name, invented for her by the creator of name-rôle of *Paganini*, Dimitri Rostoff. With the De Basil Company which included such dancers as Woizikowski, Kirsova, Youskevitch and Slavinsky she visited Australia, New Zealand and the Continent.

ANNA NORTHCOTE with three of her pupils in her West Street studio.
Photo : Douglas Elston.

Ballets in which she has danced make a most impressive list and include *Le Lac des Cygnes, Les Sylphides, Le Carnaval, Prince Igor, La Fille mal Gardée, Le Beau Danube, Les Présages, Scuola di Ballo, L'Apres Midi d'un Faune* and many others. Works which she would most like to see revived one day are *Choreatium, Cotillon, L'Epreuve d'Amour* and *Symphonie Fantastique.*

Teachers of the teacher

Like most professional dancers she has studied with many teachers, but the three who made the greatest impression on her were Margaret Craske (Cecchetti's senior pupil and assistant), Nicholas Legat and Préobrajenska. In her own classes, for example, one will often see certain Cecchetti exercises, especially for the boys, but the influence of her Russian teachers is also strongly shown. In fact when two Scandinavian dancers who had been dancing in Russia were asked what their classes were like there, the answer was: "Very much like the classes we have here with Madame Anna."

I think she is fortunate in having such a spectacular array of leading professional dancers invariably in class. Most of them go to "Anna's" whenever they are in London for they realise that she is one of the few teachers capable of giving a virtuoso class suitable for their advanced techniques — as they also understand her method of tuition they are able to get maximum benefit from even only a few hours' work. And, in consequence, the younger dancers have excellent professionals on whom they can model themselves at their sides in this friendly, competitive environment.

Enthusiasm with clairvoyance

If, at times, one feels that she is guilty of an excess of enthusiasm with a particular pupil, it is probably because years of experience in measuring and assessing the potentials of dancers have given her a remarkably accurate power of prediction. She is not often wrong and she knows how to provide the appropriate psychological climate — whether it be extreme patience or an iron fist and no nonsense — in which a particular pupil will develop.

Although she has been begged to accept positions as ballet mistress to various companies. she has never really had any intention of cutting herself off from her own studio with its ever-alive. ever-changing cosmopolitan atmosphere. Until this year. when on holidays classes were given by her friend, Madame Lydia Kyasht. Kyasht was much loved by the pupils, but now, regrettably, her health has compelled her to reduce teaching activities. "And." said Anna Northcote, "it is not easy to find another professional teacher who has the same background of training." On a few occasions Marina Svetlova or Michel de Lutry have been free for a week or two from their own heavy engagements and have given classes which were very much appreciated.

While nobody would discount her effectiveness as a conversationalist, there is nothing arty or *chi-chi* about her. She is not bogged down in a vague inner-world of woolly theories on dance aesthetics — all talk and no work. Anna Northcote is a very down-to-earth practical teacher.

Orchestral Magic from Monteux and Beecham

Tchaikovsky: *The Sleeping Beauty* — Excerpts. London Symphony Orchestra (Pierre Monteux). RCA RB 16063. 12 in. 39*s*. 11½*d*.

THIS record could well be said to add still further lustre to the legend of the Diaghilev Ballet, for if this is how Pierre Monteux conducted Tchaikovsky in the theatre when he was with the company, the effect must have been overwhelmingly rich and splendid.

There is the same grand-manner sweep and intensity of phrasing, unflagging rhythmic vitality and a connoisseur's savour for instrumental colour that came as such a revelation when we heard the Covent Garden Orchestra play *Swan Lake* under Yuri Faier. Monteux works a similar miracle with the LSO, whose playing, barring some occasionally suspect intonation from the bass, has everything needed in the way of virtuosity and full-blooded, keen response, and leaves no doubt that under Monteux's inspired direction every player was caught up in the magic of the music, sharing his obvious enthusiasm for it.

The selection — much more generous than the details printed on the sleeve and labels indicate — gives what could well be called the cream of the score and is made up of the following items. Prologue: Introduction; March; *Pas de Six*; Variation of the Fairy of the Song-Birds (*Canari qui chante*); Variation of the Fairy of the Golden Vine (*Violante*). Act 1: *Garland* Waltz; *Rose Adagio*; Aurora's Variation; *Danse Vertigo*. Act 2: Farandole; Panorama. Act 3: Polacca; *Pas de Quatre* ("Florestan" pas de trois) — *Entrée, Silver* Variation, *Diamond* Variation and *Coda* only; *Bluebird Pas de Deux*; *Red Riding Hood and the Wolf*; Desiré-Aurora *Pas de Deux* — *Adagio* and *Coda* ("Three Ivans") only; Mazurka and Apotheosis.

The third-act Mazurka is played in fuller form than on any other recording, except for Dorati's absolutely complete Mercury set, and Monteux does not make the traditional stage cut in Bluebird's Variation.

Tempi are generally much more lively than those to which we have become accustomed — but not, given the will and technique, too fast for dancing. A single exception is the *Entrée* section of the *pas de quatre* music used by the Royal Ballet for the Florestan-cum-Sisters *pas de trois*, where Monteux greatly exceeds Tchaikovsky's metronome marking of crochet 92.

The recording is strong, exceptionally vivid and sharply defined, and the only matter for serious regret is that it is only a single-disc selection and not the complete ballet.

SLEEVE COVER for RCA's new recording of excerpts from The Sleeping Beauty *has this action picture from the American NBC colour television production of the ballet, given by the Royal Ballet in 1956. Fonteyn, as the sleeping Aurora at the end of Act I, is seen carried by (from left) John Hart, John Field, Gary Burne and Desmond Doyle, with Leslie Edwards as Cattalabutte.*

Drab Delibes

Delibes: *Coppélia* — Excerpts. *Sylvia* — Excerpts. Paris Opéra Orchestra (André Cluytens). Columbia 33CX 1505. 12 in. 41*s*. 8½*d*.

BOTH ballets are by now well represented on records, though we still await a complete *Sylvia*. The present coupling of suites from the two works lies very much in the shadow of similar 12-inch offerings by Decca (Désormière) and HMV (Monteux), for the Paris Opéra Orchestra's playing is surprisingly coarse and unenticing, and Cluytens' direction is of a routine dullness that denies Delibes' melodies their lightness and sparkle, leaving them sounding stale and positively leaden-footed.

The *Sylvia* side, moreover, is distinctly short-measure, playing for only 17 minutes and containing three movements less than its Decca and HMV equivalents.

Exotic Fairytale

Rimsky-Korsakov: *Scheherazade*. Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (Sir Thomas Beecham). HMV ALP 1564. 12 in. 41*s*. 8½*d*.

FEW works in the symphonic and ballet repertoire provide so sure and revealing a test of a conductor's sensibility as *Scheherazade*. All too often it is treated as a lurid, Hollywood-style Oriental extravaganza, or as a mere orchestral showpiece, whereas it is in the fullest sense of the term a symphonic poem, and a masterpiece at that.

NEW RECORDS
Reviewed by DAVID HUNT

There are now a dozen recorded performances from which to choose, ranging from the supercharged, streamlined vulgarity of such as Ormandy's, through to the rather antiseptic and frigid refinement of Ansermet's performance. An example *par excellence* of story-telling in music, the work demands that its conductor should share the composer's rôle of raconteur, and there is no conductor living more suited to this rôle than Sir Thomas Beecham. His concert performances of the work are justly celebrated and it was to be expected that when he came to record it his version would have a certain something lacking on the others.

It has turned out as magical as one had dared hope, an exquisitely shaped performance that holds the ear and imagination enthralled from start to finish. The RPO play ravishingly and the recording reproduces the merest whisp of *pianissimo* as vividly as it takes in the crashing, colourful climaxes. Bakst's design for the décor of Fokine's ballet is reproduced in colour on the sleeve.

Arnell Excerpt

Arnell: *The Angels — Roundelay*. Pro Arte Orchestra (Richard Arnell). Pye CEM 36003. EP (45). 12*s*. 10½*d*.

I AM all in favour of records being issued of music by contemporary British composers, and one must applaud the Pye company's enterprise in releasing this extended-play excerpt from the score for Cranko's latest ballet—and so soon after the event! But it would have been far better for Arnell's reputation if something from *Harlequin in April* could have been chosen instead of this surprisingly undistinguished and very curious "Roundelay".

Not having yet seen *The Angels*, I do not know if Cranko's choreography at this point took the form of a "round dance"; nor can I judge whether the music takes on a coherence and effectiveness in the theatre it certainly does not have away from the ballet. After listening to the disc several times, I found the piece exceedingly unmemorable, and for this reason it could be said to be an essential acquisition for those wanting an aural souvenir of the ballet.

A Faust Ballet

Egk: *Kleine Abraxas Suite*. Radio Symphony Orchestra of Berlin (Ferenc Fricsay). DGG EPL 30228. EP (45), 16*s*. 8½*d*.

FIRST produced in Munich in 1948, *Abraxas* was for a time banned by the censor because of its provocative theme, based on Heine's *Doktor Faust*, in which Mephistopheles is a woman. The intriguing possibilities of the story, actually intended by Heine for a ballet never produced, were effectively exploited by Hélène Kirsova in her three-act *Faust*, choreographed for her Australian company in 1941, with music by Henry Krips.

The three movements contained in this "Little Suite" from Egk's music are every bit as eclectic as Arnell's for *The Angels*. The first has a strong flavour of Kodály's *Dances of Galanta*, while the remaining two are strikingly reminiscent of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*. But whereas Arnell's music is flabby and dull, Egk's is grippingly theatrical and, extremely well played and recorded, is well worth investigating.

UKRAINIAN DANCERS: The Ukrainian State Cossack Company, reviewed last month, in their lively Dnieper Cossacks *number in Margaret Dale's BBC Television presentation. Photo: BBC*

DANCERS FROM CEYLON: Sesha Palihakkara and Lilini Roy, two dancers from Kandy, in Granada's Chelsea at Eight *programme.*

From Far and Near

A BLUE ROSE

Excerpts given by the Royal Ballet on Granada Independent Television on April 1. Music, Samuel Barbar. Décor, Yolanda Sonnaben. Choreography, Peter Wright.

ANNE HEATON DONALD MacLEARY
PATRICIA COX MICHAEL BOULTON
AUDREY FARRISS

HERE is a ballet which looked pleasant and attractive in the theatre but completely insignificant on television, and the reason it left so little impression lies in its décor. All the subtle pastel shades of the set and costumes appeared as the same grey tone on the television screen.

The ballet itself builds up and gathers momentum in the ensembles of the Tango, but, playing safe, the cameras backed further and further away from the swirling turns and supported lifts. Thus when one would have thought that this was a perfect excuse for the cameras to be almost in among the dancers, all we could see on the screen was a picture as if seen from the gallery at Covent Garden — only smaller. Under such direction the work failed to reach any sort of climax.

A better and larger prop rose should have been supplied — the one used looked like one of those metal things used for scrubbing saucepans. The work was not adapted to meet the special demands of television. Rather than being allowed a free hand, a little assistance or original direction could probably have made it look a lot better. In the general obscurity Donald MacLeary and Audrey Farriss appeared to give good performances.

ROYAL DANES

Given on BBC Children's Television on Good Friday. Dances from the Royal Danish Ballet's production of La Sylphide, **Choreography by Bournonville, music by Loevenskjold; and** Casse-Noisette, **Choreography by Ivanov, arranged by Erik Bruhn. Designer, Joseph Carl. Produced by Naomi Capon. Introduced by Peggy van Praagh.**

HENNING KRONSTAM
KIRSTEN SIMONE

AGAIN a well-produced programme of charming excerpts appeared filling in time on Children's Television. *La Sylphide,* as Peggy van Praagh said when introducing the dancers, is unfortunately not in any English repertoire. More the pity then that a wider evening audience was deprived of seeing this programme.

It opened with the mime passage of the Chair Scene — the Sylphide leaning over the sleeping James, stealing the ring from him, and his awakening with mimed "Who are you, why are you here?" This led into the Forest Scene with its *variation* for each dancer, and the brief *pas de deux* which ends with the Sylphide's death.

TELEVISION
Reviewed by E. C. MASON

The dances are comparatively simple — the most remarkable aspects of hers being slow *pirouettes* — his, mainly *jetés, jetés battu* and *cabrioles.* But the appeal of the work lies mostly in the Danish style, carriage and use of arms and hands, neatness of technique, and facial expression. For this performance its success was most of all due to the splendid understanding and *rapport* between the dancers. I don't think it would be possible to find two English dancers of equal technical ability who could express in close-ups the delicateness of the mime, or the thoughtful, troubled, yearning, entranced looks without looking strained, self-conscious or anxious to get on with the dancing.

The *Casse-Noisette pas de deux* was excellently danced, and although the dancers seem perfectly comfortable in this work, grace and style tends to triumph out sparkle and bravura. Kirsten Simone's turns were magnificent, but her approach to this type of rôle seems a little too careful.

Despite the limited space which the dancers used with intelligence, Naomi Capon's production was very satisfactory. Joseph Carl's décors, which included a nice rather scrawly frontispiece sketch of the Royal Theatre, were in pleasantly good taste.

LES SYLPHIDES

Given on BBC Television on Easter Sunday. Designer, Guy Sheppard. Producer, Margaret Dale.

NADIA NERINA PHILIP CHATFIELD
ROWENA JACKSON JULIA FARRON

IT seems to me that *Les Sylphides* is not such a frail work that it needs an array of effects to make it an acceptable television ballet. It was particularly well danced on this occasion, and when danced well it creates much of its own atmosphere. Whether the intention was to heighten atmosphere or to "improve" the ballet for non-ballet audiences, some viewers may consider that Margaret Dale went a little too far in her production.

I can think of no special effect which could be appropriate which was left out, and while some of these were visually attractive the sum total seemed too much. There were shots of clouds, slow-motion effects during the overture of dancers floating (a little bumpily at times) through the trees, a lily pond kept in rippling motion by a little jet of water which hissed into it, a lot of trees and additional foliage, views of a chapel through greenery and views of the dancers in the opening and closing tableaux through the cinquefoil window of the chapel. Some of the exits were made through what appeared to be pretty dense shrubbery. Julia Farron parted a few branches to dance the *Prélude* nicely, and she finished it half-way up a discreet little path — the type which James Agate once said always led to Public Conveniences. Chatfield, in off-white tights, made a devout entrance, walking along another path from the chapel, presumably after late service. The studio floor was painted to give a mottled leafy effect and there was a little mossy ramp at the back for the principals to run up and down. This décor was attributed to Guy Shepherd, but looked more like the work of a team of gardeners.

However, whether one likes realistic décors or not (natural surroundings always make dancers in costume look curiously unreal), there was infinitely too much and it took up wing space. The stage seemed narrow, compressing *corps de ballet* semi-circle patterns into a narrower V-shape. One problem concerning *Les Sylphides* on a small screen is that the *corps* movement when seen behind the principals appears distracting — something which does not occur in a stage performance. But as the dancing was very good, in particular Rowena Jackson's, it was possible to appreciate it while being out of sympathy with the production treatment.

The blending of romanticism with a naturalistic décor failed to really come off and the issue was confused and sentimentalised. Whether the approach was due to a mistaken belief that viewers crave for realism, or an indication of what the BBC considers must measure up to its accepted standards of popular taste, the programme was a pleasant antidote to the ugliness we have become so familiar with on the television screen. It has probably won some viewers over to ballet and lost none — because I am sure that the specialists have long given up watching television in the hope of seeing dance presented to their tastes.

KANDYAN DANCERS

Given on Granada Independent Television in Chelsea at Eight on April 5.

SESHA PALIHAKKARA LILINI ROY

WHEN the Queen visited Ceylon during her Commonwealth tour she saw a traditional Sinhalese ballet in which the rôle of the Prince was danced by Sesha Palihakkara. In this programme he appeared in a short dance about a god and a goddess and executed a traditional piece of mime.

But for television the storytelling qualities of the mime were stressed at the expense of other more interesting aspects of this school of exotic dance. Viewers were shown, with running commentary, the inevitable lotus being sipped by the bee before closing its petals for the night.

The dance itself is obviously a direct offshoot of Indian schools and it is performed in a jerky style of thrusts and syncopations, which generally speaking are varied by poses in full *plié* in wide second position or by the head shifting in a vertical plane from shoulder to shoulder. There are quiet sole taps with feet turned up, sometimes beating a rhythm with the big toe joint or heel, while the arms, which ripple from finger tip to shoulder, execute the "variations".

They danced against a set which seemed to be nothing more than a clever arrangement of pieces of tinted mosquito net. But, despite its highbrow tone, the total result was rather tedious.

In the same programme, Elizabeth Seal danced a sophisticated parody on the tango, which included some ingenious steps by an anonymous choreographer. Carrying an osprey fan as large and as droopy as a willow tree and also, most of the time, carrying her partner, Tommy Linden, who was made-up as a swarthy and pudgy little Latin-American in light suit and two-toned shoes, she scored many laughs.

QUARTET

Given on Granada Independent Television on April 8. Music, Arthur Wilkinson.

GILLIAN LYNNE IRVING DAVIES
BERYL KAYE PADDY STONE

ADVANCE publicity promised that this new short work would tease classical ballet — "a good-natured skit or take-off on ballet dancers".

However, the amount of teasing proved to be very slight indeed in performance. Only Gillian Lynne, probably because she has had the most ballet experience, seemed to really know where to guy classical dance. The others were definitely less successful in this part of the act. But surely if any skit is to be a success it must have an audience completely familiar with what it is "sending up". Unless done at the broadest and crudest level — the boys in *tutus* or dancing a *mambo classique* in male cavalier costume, for example — is there a large enough viewing audience so familiar with classical ballet as to be able to appreciate a skit on it?

But despite my dislike of the idea, the modern-style choreography was very pleasant and professional. Paddy Stone's approach is direct and confident and there are no vague or half-sketched movements to confuse the effects. His style calls for general vigour, slickness and disciplined timing rather than for individual grace and expression, but this does not make it any less agreeable in total effect. In fact one got quite a lift out of his varied use of rhythm, speed and effects of spacing.

I particularly liked his floor patterns and groupings. Television cameras tend to be too static for dance and often give an appearance of flatness in the movement because a limited range of angle shots are used. Paddy Stone appeared to sidestep this difficulty neatly by using more angles and *épaulement* in his choreography. It is to be hoped that he gets the chance to show his talent in a more ambitious work.

Very few close-ups were used. This was probably all to the good because in long shots the burlesque "aids" were given very little emphasis.

Dance and Dancers . . . AT HOME

THE ROYAL BALLET (I) at Covent Garden

Mainly gala

FOR some years the annual gala which the Royal Ballet puts on to raise money for its Benevolent Fund was hardly an occasion which lived up to its name. Rather ponderous it was and the regulars were comparatively little in evidence. The Opera House seemed to be invaded by hordes unfamiliar with the art of ballet. What was more, we used to be attacked by debutantes, twittering in net, whose innocuous appearances belied tendencies little short of open piracy — nothing less than ten bob or a quid for the gala programmes they were selling if you happened to be foolish enough to have no change.

Wisdom has eventually come to the Administration of Covent Garden, and today these evenings are more light-hearted, due mainly to the presence of the Queen Mother, who inevitably spreads a spirit of enjoyment to every occasion. The be-muslined debs have been mainly replaced by students from the Royal Ballet School, and the extra-sized programmes now only cost five bob.

Not actually that the main dish offered for our delectation — the revival of Helpmann's *Hamlet*, which was reviewed last month — could really be called a gala ballet. But the programme started all right with that "kind of game for one . . ." which is MacMillan's *Solitaire*. It was about as suitable as anything I can think of in the present Royal Ballet repertoire.

Anya Linden, as the Girl who gets involved and left out of the high-spirited junketings, dances well, but somehow she causes the ballet to lack any meaning at all. That feeling of loneliness and touching enjoyment when she is noticed and allowed to join in, all of which made Margaret Hill's original performance so enchanting, was never apparent in Linden's. Brian Shaw also suffered from having to take over a rôle from that most individual of character dancers, Donald Britton, but he danced well. The real impact of this performance came from Pirmin Trecu and Maryon Lane. The latter deservedly brought the house down with her *Polka*, which she gave with every ounce of crisp soubrette charm that her neat little body could muster. The rest of the company were adequate and the boys jumped with Bolshoi-like exuberance, though some of the lines were rather ragged.

Desmond Heeley's setting has developed some nasty brown stripes which make the whole thing look very muddy. Some brighter colours in the rainbow skirts for a group of girls are no improvement while the petrol green stomachers for the boys are as hard and unyielding as ever. Not even the dim lighting nor Hugo Rignold's plodding interpretation of Malcolm Arnold's effervescent score wholly detracted from MacMillan's admirable ballet.

Ashton's *La Péri*, which followed, has been altered in its opening passages owing to the intervention of the family of the ballet's composer — Paul Dukas. It has also been improved by better lighting and adjustments in the mechanism of André Levasseur's setting. The ballet has been reviewed more fully elsewhere in this issue when it was given at Monte Carlo, so I will say no more than that it was given a most polished performance by Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes.

The British are not good at divertissements, though the one which concluded the programme was obviously the sort of thing that should be given at a gala performance of this kind. Somehow the dancers of these islands lack the *brio* and scintillating virtuosity which are the only qualities for making this kind of concert performance acceptable. Opening with a good but uninspired performance of the last act *pas de deux* from *The Sleeping Beauty* by Rowena Jackson and Philip Chatfield, we went on to the Neapolitan Dance from *Le Lac des Cygnes*, given with the usual show-stopping ebullience of Alexander Grant and Rosemary Lindsay. But far and away the most radiant performances of the evening came with the *pas de deux* from the last act of *The Prince of the Pagodas*, danced by Beriosova and Blair. Oddly enough this is a *pas de deux* which can be taken out of its context with greater success than it actually achieves in the ballet itself. Possiby the reason for this is that during the ballet, the audience waits for two and a half acts for a strong *pas de deux* such as Petipa always achieved in his ballets; when it arrives it is not as good as we hoped for. Given separately, as in this gala evening, there is not such a sense of expectation so that it comes as a pleasant surprise to

find that it is as good as it is. No doubt Beriosova and Blair will be dancing this *pas de deux* in concerts all over the world — and the concerts will be all the better for it.

Ninette de Valois created a solo to Schumann music for Nadia Nerina specially for the occasion. It had everything that a concert solo should have and most of the steps that de Valois has used in her many ballets, which does not mean to say that it added up to a piece of choreography of world-shaking importance. Technically, Nerina danced it excellently, but even *soli* created for no reason other than to display the vocabulary of the dance and its dancer should surely have a greater style. I can remember Pavlova dancing numerous items of far less importance than this, but somehow her style and artistry convinced you that they were masterpieces.

As a grand finale, Fonteyn and Somes danced the last act *pas de deux* from *Casse Noisette*. This was not the Ivanov *pas de deux* we have come to accept, possibly erroneously, as being authentic, nor was it the one which Alfred Rodrigues created for La Scala at Milan and which, from reports, was quite charming. For this occasion, Fonteyn had gone to Karsavina to learn the version which the great Russian ballerina danced in St. Petersburg. It is much softer and in it it is possible to see the Bournonville French influence which eventually combined with the Italian school to form what we know of as the Russian school. I feel that it would fit more happily into the complete ballet than what we see today. On the other hand the more brilliant and showy version we know so well is more suited to concert presentation, which is bound to lack the right environment and has to rely on pyrotechnical displays to get across. Nevertheless Fonteyn and Somes danced beautifully in spite of the fact that she was wearing a most unattractive tutu.

P. W.

Fonteyn in three rôles

MARGOT FONTEYN's art has never become stagnant. Every season, or so it seems it has shown some development. At present she appears to be in a transitionary stage, and her performances are marked by an ever-increasing simplification, a fining away of all superficial embellishment which is perhaps aimed at leaving behind only the rôle's basic essentials.

One unfortunate result of this transitionary phase has been a certain surprising inconsistency in her performance. Her Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty*, earlier in the season, proved broad, grand and sumptuous, and was crowned with a last act *pas de deux* of poetic virtuosity. A matinee performance of Odette-Odile in *Swan Lake*, on the other hand, found her at less than her best. A few minor changes in her portrayal — including a slight adaptation to the most famous lift in her second act *pas de deux* with Somes — had not been completely assimilated, and a rather mannered quality, so near yet so far from the true stylisation of simplicity, was discernible.

Her first *Giselle* of the season on the afternoon of April 26 turned out to be another interpretation in flux. In this particular instance I understand, via the grapevine, that Fonteyn had consulted Madame Karsavina about her performance and consequently this represented a quite conscious attempt at a new approach to a rôle that hitherto would never have been accounted as among her best.

If I am reading the signs aright it would seem that her reappraisal of the part has led her to search for a new naturalism, so that her approach, although not, of course, her interpretation, would be somewhat similar to that of Ulanova's. Quite a few new touches, presumably inspired by Karsavina, have been added, so the result, while perhaps more simple in conception, was at the same time more detailed in execution.

Unfortunately the clear outline of her apparently new reading has not yet emerged, but the target could be seen even where the aim seemed not entirely certain. She still dances the first act solo as if it were the Petipa variation it very probably is; while I am sure this prima-ballerina exuberance corresponds closely to the manner in which it was performed at the Maryinsky around the turn of the century, it is less appropriate today when we aim at a more consciously "authentic" realisation of ballet romanticism. It was also alien to the naturalistic manner, as was the dramatic inconsistency when during the mad scene Giselle's inherent sense of feudal duty forces her to bob a curtsey at the Duke, while earlier she had been able to overcome this subconscious sense of caste sufficiently to hurl the necklace in the direction of Bathilde.

Beriosova and others

SVETLANA BERIOSOVA's Giselle, seen a week earlier on April 17, was a further amplification of the portrayal she first so deftly sketched two years ago. Even then it was a remarkably assured characterisation and it has since become very probably the best thing Beriosova does. Here there was a warmth, womanliness and instinctive response to situation and music that has in part deserted — presumably temporarily — Beriosova during this season. The plaintive yet well-accentuated mad scene was particularly successful in being conceived as part of the total characterisation, and not being tagged on as an extraneous, and almost startling, monologue. Her second act was equally notable, especially for the quite unusual yet nicely judged balance of etheriality and humanity which the ballerina achieved.

Both Fonteyn and Beriosova were nobly assisted by their partners. Michael Somes, in common with Fonteyn, also appeared to be trying to invest his acting with a greater air of naturalness, and, also like her, this "naturalness" at present has a touch of contrivance about it. Philip Chatfield's Albrecht suffered in part from his failure to consolidate his original characterisation. Just at the moment his acting has lost a certain amount of its original force and sincerity. This deficiency was partially atoned for by a far higher standard of actual dancing than he previously attained. Technically he has made great strides of late, but it is to be hoped that these have not been achieved at the permanent expense of his acting, which at one time possessed quite a lot of distinction.

With everyone seeming to do something new, it was perhaps only to be expected that Leslie Edwards would present a new-look Hilarion, and, in fact, his was by far the most successful of all the new looks taken. In a sense he has softened the character even further. For years he has discarded the pure and simple villain, and indeed he ran the danger of making Hilarion into a rather too heroic prig. This season he has treated him very much as a real human, with as many faults as virtues, ruining his love for Giselle with petty jealousy. It now all adds up to that rare thing in ballet, a portrait in depth.

C. B.

Linden as Princess Aurora

WE have become so accustomed to experienced Auroras only that I think one is inclined to underestimate the difficulties confronting a newcomer. However, having to follow in the shadow of senior and more spectacular dancers is only one of the occupational hazards of an aspiring ballerina with the Royal Ballet.

And so at the 300th performance of *The Sleeping Beauty*, Anya Linden made her Covent Garden debut as Aurora; a rôle she had in fact danced during the recent American tour. While from the standpoint of technique she is possibly the least well-equipped to be offered this rôle in recent seasons, one can report with enthusiasm that some of the qualities which count are present in her interpretation. And they encourage one to expect some really fine performances when she is completely at home in the rôle.

It is true that most of the assets which help her so much as Aurora are natural ones acquired or enhanced with no great effort to herself — an air of immaturity and modesty, a natural ease and suppleness and a delightful appearance.

While she has gained in strength and her technique has improved all round, no special side of it has been developed to the degree of becoming a feature exciting enough to admire or exploit. This should ultimately make for evenly danced performances, but it also means that any lack of technical brilliance demands a better-acted interpretation than she offers at this stage.

While it would be neither fair nor true to call her a mere imitator, she is not yet completely master of her material. No one would call her interpretation rich in subtlety or originality, but she has probably not had time to absorb the rôle sufficiently well to turn it to good personal account.

On the other hand, her performance, which was not as confidently danced as it will no doubt be in a year's time, was generally excellent and better judged in *tempi* than is usual for her. Although nothing delights a critic more than being able to acclaim a new ballerina worthy of the title (a title one would prefer to be used less freely), it can be said that this performance certainly brought her more than one step nearer that goal. This is all the more gratifying because there was nothing in some of her recent appearances in other works even faintly prophetic of her having the requisite talents for Aurora. At times she has appeared too listless, reticent or indifferent, but, for me, this was the first occasion when she really appeared to lose her irritating coolness and exert herself — even to the point of showing a touch of nerves and some strain in the shoulders at times.

In the Rose Adagio she had some pardonable difficulty in getting a balance (for when this does not come at once no amount of manipulating ever seems to bring it), and yet in the rest of the ballet her balance was good. Her elusiveness as she drifted through the Vision scene positively suggested a vision of Princess Aurora. However, I would have preferred her to offer more suggestion of the excitement a young Princess would (or theatrically should) show on her sixteenth birthday. In the last act her dancing was adequate throughout and brilliant in patches — although lacking the classic grandeur of Fonteyn and Beriosova and the glitter of Nerina. Her point work was crisp and her *pirouettes* cleanly executed, but throughout her turns *en manège* flag a little and never get any observable impetus from the music.

She was skilfully partnered by David Blair, who supported her turns and *arabesques* with a rock-like steadiness and

phrased the lifts musically. To the virtuosity of his own variation he has added a note of flamboyance. And now that he has more confidence in his acting, he has shed a tendency towards stiffness — although it would help if he registered just a little more feeling at the first vision of Aurora.

In the same performance there were a number of other interesting cast changes. Catherine Boulton was a new Lilac Fairy, and showed a warmth and radiance reminiscent of Beryl Grey, clean mime and an excellent command of the stage. Unfortunately, her dancing was marred by a general unsteadiness and lacked style.

Two dancers who are deservedly beginning to compete for attention, Doreen Wells and Shirley Grahame, brought considerable sparkle to the Prologue variations, while Margaret Hill infused a fresh breath of style into the rather uninteresting "Crystal Fountain" variation.

David Drew, Brenda Taylor and Margaret Mercier — as Florestan and his Sisters — turned this trio into an irresistible delight by their *bravura* and freshness. Drew's dancing was technically excellent — elegant, neat and stylish.

Graham Usher and Merle Park, both confident and certain of the brilliance of effect of their movements, gave dazzling performances as the Blue Birds. He is fortunate in having beautiful feet, smooth well-finished *pirouettes* and an adequate elevation, but more fortunate in having what some other dancers of this rôle lack — the stamina to execute the strenuous *temps de poisson* and *brisés volé* without the last few of each becoming strained or ragged.

E. C. M.

WELCOME RETURN: Rowena Jackson and David Blair in Ashton's masterly Scènes de Ballet, *which has returned to the Royal Ballet's repertoire this season. A picture of Nerina and Shaw in this ballet will be found on the cover. Photo: Roy Round.*

Two Giselles — Jackson and Nerina

AFTER a lot of chopping and changing around, it was eventually Jackson who danced the first *Giselle* of the season on April 16. It was also *her* first Giselle and she had to take over the rôle at uncomfortably short notice. She did not begin so well and she simpered far too much, but as she got the feel of the rôle and of the production she toned down. Everything was most immaculately danced and her two *pirouettes* in the first act variation were worthy of Markova. This much I expected of Jackson, but the great surprise came with her mad scene. It was played with great sincerity and simplicity and amounted to a model upon which all ballerinas attempting this exacting part of the old ballet for the first time might well base themselves. Her madness was uncluttered with detail and moved naturally to its tragic movement — it moved naturally to its tragic climax. She has built for herself the perfect foundation upon which to base her future performances though she should beware of adding any unnecessary touches, as I am certain that tall dancers should keep everything on the stage as simple as possible.

Blair's Count Albrecht is, as regard to the development of his interpretation, at a bit of a standstill. He has passed the stage of youthful brashness but has not yet achieved maturity. There is nothing much wrong with his dancing but his mime lacks conviction. All his movements are too superficial and not deeply felt and he should act with the whole of his body rather than just his arms, hands and face. The trouble at the moment is that he is not dancing in *Giselle* with anyone who can help and correct him — a few more performances with Markova would make the world of difference.

Other dancing honours of the first act went to Maryon Lane and Brian Shaw in the peasant *pas de deux*. They make a perfect pair and I cannot remember anyone dancing the first male variation as well as did Shaw on this particular night. This season has seen Shaw right back at the top of his form.

Jackson as the Wili Giselle in the second act had really found her feet. It looked as though she had based much of it on Markova's performance. Again the simplicity coupled with fine dancing all through and a sense of style and period added up to an immensely impressive first performance. Although for years Jackson has astounded us with her technical ability, particularly in her turns, it was highly gratifying to discover from this performance that she is also an artist of no mean merit.

Another interesting performance came from Catherine Boulton in Beriosova's rôle from Cranko's *The Shadow*, which started the evening. Boulton makes no attempt to copy Beriosova, but has developed something that is quite personal and, in its own way, most satisfying. She was assured and surmounted the many hazards of the rôle with apparent ease and a soft beauty which made her performance touching. It is a pity that the Royal Ballet is soon to lose Boulton, who will be retiring from the stage on her forthcoming marriage.

Hill's Night

ON April 26, Nadia Nerina danced Giselle with David Blair as her Albrecht and she started off very well indeed. In the opening moments of the ballet she danced most beautifully and was wholly convincing. A change came, however, with her variation. She went into it with such hearty energy that it was impossible to believe that the girl could subsequently be incapable of surmounting anything so minor as a swain's defection with anything other than a shrug. What she completely lacked was any delicacy. From this moment on her performance deteriorated — her madness failed to move, her ethereality as a Wili did not exist. As in so many of Nerina's performances, no blame could be placed at her feet with regard to the actual dancing, but her interpretation and approach to the rôle, after the first twenty minutes, lacked any feeling of understanding. From the waist downwards, Nerina is a magnificent artist, but her *port de bras* and her hands in particular are quite insensitive.

In the second act a strange thing happened — Giselle was danced and acted off the stage and into Floral Street by the Queen of the Wilis. As far as the story is concerned this is probably quite right; as far as the ballet with its great ballerina rôle is concerned this is unfortunate. Margaret Hill's Myrtha was the best we have seen since the company moved to Covent Garden. This ex-Rambert dancer completely dominated the act, dancing with a breadth worthy of the Bolshoi and acting this evil supernatural monarch up to the hilt. This does not mean that her performance was full of fussy little tricks and details, far from it. Her performance gained its power by their elimination and its complete simplification. Her cold evil mask shone in the moonlight and her imperious gestures subjugated her subjects. Particularly did I like the way she indicated to Giselle exactly where she should dance.

In the first act *pas de deux*, Pirmin Trecu underlined the progressive eminence he has shown throughout the season. His partner, Annette Page, was adequate, though she has not progressed as fast as her obvious talents once gave hope of. The Hilarion on both the occasions reviewed here was Franklin White. He gave a rather demented performance which had nothing much to do with Hilarion's true character. He is so cluttering his performance with detail which has little to do with the main structure of the ballet that I feel it is time for him to pause, reconsider the rôle and start again. He is a sensitive and intelligent artist, and it would be a pity if his undoubted usefulness to the company was marred by over-elaboration of his various rôles. He would do well to remember the rightness and convincing simplicity of the Hilarions in the Bolshoi production.

It could honestly be said that this was Margaret Hill's evening because she returned to the rôle of the Girl in MacMillan's *Solitaire*, which preceded *Giselle*. This has been written about more fully elsewhere so I will only say that when she originally created the rôle up at Sadler's Wells Theatre I thought she gave the most enchanting *demi-caractére* performance in the existing British repertoire — I still do.

P. W.

Helpmann's Petrushka

ROBERT HELPMANN's long-awaited first appearance in *Petrushka* on April 21 proved, in its way, extremely

interesting. The press reports the day after were almost without exception damning, and even then hardly told the full story of the disappointing failure. Yet although, to be honest, I found this a performance of hardly any intrinsic worth whatsoever, it interested me enormously in the very clear and rather cruel light it shone on Helpmann's deficiencies as an actor-dancer.

It was, of course, a first performance, and one can make certain allowances for that. On the other hand Helpmann is no young newcomer thrown on to the stage with insufficient time for rehearsal. He had known for some months that he was going to appear in *Petrushka,* and presumably, having regard to his status, had been given every opportunity to prepare himself for this terribly important debut. I understand that he studied — rather briefly — with the Grigorieffs, and one of my colleagues mentioned in his review that he had received advice from Tamara Karsavina.

In the old days we all used to say that although Helpmann may not have been any great shakes as a dancer (he was usually called "a beautiful stylist"), as an actor he was peerless. When I was younger I accepted this judgment unquestioningly, but later when the company moved to Covent Garden I began to have doubts. There was I felt, something wrong, something off-key about his mime. During this past season, when he has returned to ballet after an absence of eight years, this impression has been strengthened, but it was not until I saw him in *Petrushka* that I understood clearly why his could never measure up to my conception of ballet acting.

The fault is, I think, quite simple. He hardly ever mimes to the music, and seems incapable of fusing his acting with his dancing. In most of the rôles in his repertoire this does not matter, and the fact that he is acting a play without words is hardly apparent. Certainly it detracts from a few episodes in *The Rake's Progress,* but his natural stagecraft and very considerable artistry can pull him through. In Fokine's *Petrushka,* dance and drama are combined in one unified statement to an extent unknown in his own ballets or in the parts specially created around Helpmann's own abilities, and here Helpmann's manner of ballet acting becomes a crippling liability.

Fokine, I understand, wanted him to dance the part before the war. Then he might have been able to perform the actual choreography more adequately than he can now. On this occasion he changed and simplified the Grigorieff version to an alarming extent. The great cell scene became a weak and flabby parody of itself, and in the next scene with the Moor when Petrushka is meant to jigger tautly across the stage pursued by the Moor, his tiny piston-limbs furiously trying to escape, Helpmann was only able to muster up a medium-paced shuffle. It was like an actor playing *King Lear* in his own peculiar version, consisting in a large part of reducing the poetry into basic English because of his inability to get his tongue round the words.

Helpmann's acting consisted to a great extent of rolling his large, luminous eyes and playing on his heartstrings as if they were a zither. His interpretation of the puppet owed little to Benois's original conception and contented itself with being the poor little clown with a real heart palpitating pallidly beneath the grease-paint, the eternally "tragic" He who gets Slapped. Knowing Helpmann's unerring knack for unearthing clichés, this interpretation came as no surprise, but the failure to sustain the characterisation proved more disquieting.

He had added a few new touches of mime to the rôle, such as his frantic face-slapping, rather like swatting flys. This is not stressed in the Grigorieff version — which after all was the one named in the programme.

Many reasons have been put forward in an attempt to explain why the Royal Ballet's production of *Petrushka* is not so successful as the earlier revival of *The Firebird,* and some of them seem quite absurd. I would have thought the main cause was the almost insuperable difficulty of presenting the crowd scenes without sufficiently mature dancers. This season the experiment of introducing a few senior male soloists into the crowd has been tried with quite gratifying results, but even so the average age of this St. Petersburg population would still astonish a census taker. Very few of the all-important minor rôles are given with anything like the right weight and authority.

At this performance it could be seen that Maryon Lane had developed well as the Doll. Her interpretation of the part as a cute and heartless chorus girl is apposite and her dancing had a crisp clockwork quality that was completely appropriate. Gary Burne's Moor is brutish and clumsy, but still misses that quality of animal magnetism that gives the Moor his magnificence. William Wilson, a newcomer as one of the two Grooms, danced exceedingly well, even if one still missed the wonderfully springy jumps of Basil Thompson, his predecessor in the part.

C. B.

DANCE LECTURES

Herma Dias on Spanish Dance

A lecture demonstration sponsored by the Dance and Movement Notation Society on April 13.

DESPITE its steady popularity there are very few people in this country who know so much about Spanish dance that they can be regarded as experts. Therefore nobody could accuse Madame Dias of "taking oranges to Seville". In tackling this unfamiliar subject she followed the sensible course of not attempting to say too much. She also avoided the approach to which many lecturers are addicted — creating a magnificent impression at the price of talking above her audience.

She concentrated on a simple style of exposition and an orderly arrangement of material, starting with brief information on the geography and history of the country. This was followed by a consideration of some of the key dances classified according to region plus what information there is in fact and legend about them. Herma Dias is also able to perform the dances she discusses and she is fortunate in having a company of her own students to illustrate group dances.

The recital commenced with Catalan dances — the *Sardana,* a symbolic labyrith-type dance which was mentioned by Homer in *The Iliad* and the *Mateixa* in which the dancers wear semi-biblical costumes. Other dances given were a Basque dance, "Arin-Arin"; a *Jota Aragonese,* a *Jota Valenciana;* a *Bolero Clasico* and the *Tirana* (superbly danced by Herma Dias herself) from Castile; a specimen of the *Sevillanas;* and some Flamenco dances — the *Soleares,* a *Bulerias* and two *Faruccas.*

Being amateurs, there were a few very indifferent dancers in her group. However, Elizabeth Parfitt and Margaret Ellis both showed marked ability.

Madame Dias's candour was appealing. She did not hesitate to point out the non-theatrical character or lack of variety in the steps of certain dances, or to label some others as trite, overrated or performed so much that she had long lost all interest in them. She also explained that some had to be performed in their most simple and uninteresting (but still authentic) versions so as to be within the powers of her dancers.

There can be few lecturers who can compete with her in combining so well the power to instruct and entertain.

E. C. M.

Dance and Dancers . . . . ABROAD

AMERICA

THE late Spring dance season in New York saw the greatest and most varied display of activity in recent memory. The major highlights of course, have been the return of Martha Graham and José Limón and their respective companies, Roland Petit's Les Ballets de Paris and the first appearances in America of the Moiseyev Dance Company. News has also been made in off-Broadway performances by Daniel Nagrin, Paul Draper, the Robert Joffrey Theatre Ballet and Ballet Theatre Workshop's preview of four new ballets.

MARTHA GRAHAM'S SEASON

After having watched Martha Graham's New York seasons for the past 22 years, it can be stated that her recent engagement with her company at the Adelphi Theatre offers a new perspective on her contributions to the whole field of dance. Aside from the masterwork of her career — the evening-length *Clytemnestra*—and a striking new work for a group of four, *Embattled Garden* (reviewed at length next month), the repertory and performing level were of such a high standard that the season as a whole marked another giant step forward in the career of America's greatest dancer. Especially noteworthy were revivals of *Night Journey, Cave of the Heart, Appalachian Spring, Seraphic Dialogue, Diversion of Angels* and *Deaths and Entrances.* During the course of this season, every choreographer and dancer of note was observed at the Graham performances and, as always, America's outstanding musicians, artists, sculptors and writers were in almost constant attendance. All of this indicates Martha Graham's enormous influence on all of the arts in the United States, and it also augers well for the future for contemporary dance in this country.

THE JULLIARD DANCE THEATRE

THE Juilliard Dance Theatre, affiliated with the Juilliard School of Music in New York, is also continuing to make important contributions to the field of modern dance. This organisation will be an integral factor in the dance plans for New York's Lincoln Square project in 1963 (first reported in our April issue), and so it becomes particularly interesting to note how dance activity is being increased by this institution.

The chief cause for applauding Juilliard at the moment is for its vision in making possible a major new work by José Limón, *Missa Brevis* (reviewed next month), as well

as new works by Anna Sokolow, Donald McKayle and an important revival of a Doris Humphrey composition. Donald McKayle's *Out of the Chrysalis,* a work for a large group set to Ernest Bloch's *Four Episodes for Piano, Winds and Strings,* marked an advance for this promising young choreographer and, though neither all of his composition nor the work of the student dancers quite measures up to the music, it has many agreeable sections. Anna Sokolow's *Session '58,* to a hot jazz score by Teo Macero, seemed rather like an updated *Interplay*. Following directly after José Limón's *Missa Brevis,* which couldn't have been more unfortunate programming, it seemed slightly vulgar and pointless despite the fact that there was some fresh invention. A revival of Doris Humphrey's 1940 choreographic setting of the Partita No. 5 in G Major by Bach was danced charmingly by the young student company but lacked the polish and suavity of its original cast of 18 years ago that was then headed by Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman and José Limón.

MOISEYEV DANCERS AT THE MET

THE Moiseyev Dance Company from Moscow, which opened its American tour at the Metropolitan Opera House under the auspices of Sol Hurok, is the first major dance company to visit the United States coming from the Soviet Union. To say that they have been a major success is putting it mildly. Before the curtain went up on their April 14 gala première, there was a 300,000 dollar advance sale for their three-week season at the box office. A continuingly bravoing brilliant first night audience and eleven curtain calls proved their overwhelming acceptance and the next day's press sealed their success with John Martin writing of their performance in *The New York Times*: "To play it safe, then, let us risk understatement and call it merely stupendous." In the *New York Herald-Tribune* Walter Terry wrote that he found the Moiseyev Dancers: "The finest folk dance troupe America has ever seen."

While admiring their tremendous speed, vitality and vigour, I must admit to a minority view on many counts. Chiefly, I found their technique and style noteworthy but, judging the company on purely folk dancing terms, as they should be, I thought that the choreography was not nearly so eloquent as that of the Dancers from Yugoslavia. Furthermore, I quite honestly was much more deeply touched and moved by the Inbal Dancers from Israel.

LES BALLETS DE PARIS

ANY season that brings Jeanmaire back to New York is a bright one and this one is no exception save for the fact that she brought very little support for her superb talents except the now very familiar vehicle, *Carmen*. As in the past, she's superb in it, but there was pitifully little for her to do in Roland Petit's more recent *La Rose des Vents* (The Weather Vane). With rather ordinary costumes and very exciting décors by Bazarte, a rather pedestrian score by Darius Milhaud, the libretto, by Albert Vidalie, is summarised in the programme as follows: " 'La Rose des Vents' is a mermaid condemned by the fates to be a simple waitress in a café by the port until she is delivered by a sailor bearing a mermaid tattooed on his chest. This sailor meets her, falls in love with her and, when he recognises what she really is, has the courage to return her to the sea — her true element." Enough said here.

Roland Petit's *Contre-Pointe,* to music by Marius Constant, projected backgrounds by Poliakoff, reminded me of nothing more than a Parisian *Interplay* with Jerome Robbins' influence almost constantly in evidence. Choreographically, *La Dame dans la Luneé* is similarly slight, but at least is blessed with an engaging score by Jean Françaix and perfectly delightful décors and costumes by Edouard Dermite. Dealing with "a young man (who) sees some fantastic apparitions inspired by the famous old pictures of the early French master movie-maker Meliés", it included a young lady who descended on a moon from the top of a stage (what a wonderful rôle for Beatrice Lillie!), two Harlequins, a Pierrot and Punchinello, some butterflies (shades of Loïe Fuller) and Can-Can girls led by Roland Petit. Now that we are all aware of Jeanmaire's brilliant talents, it's high time that Roland Petit composed something worthwhile to suit them. Meanwhile, it's still a delight to have her back.

BALLETS : U.S.A.

JEROME ROBBINS' American ballet company, which dances this summer at the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy, and at the Brussels World's Fair, will perform five ballets, three of them by Robbins himself. These include a new work, *Four Jazz Pieces,* with music by Bob Prince and décor and costumes by Ben Shan; a revised version of *The Concert,* to Chopin's music, originally presented by the New York City Ballet in 1956; also a revival of *Afternoon of a Faun.* The two other works are William Dollar's *Musical Chairs,* to a Stravinsky score, and Herbert Ross's controversial ballet, originally produced by Ballet Theatre Workshop in 1957, *The Maids,* based on Jean Genet's play, with music by Darius Milhaud and décor by John Ward.

Arthur Todd.

FRANCE

THE PARIS OPERA

GRADUALLY reinstated, the *corps de ballet* was intact again by the end of March. However, the new contracts which are in force until the end of the year only bring them a ten per cent salary increase. This provisory agreement will allow the company to fulfil its numerous obligations. the first of which is its appearance in Moscow from May 20 to June 18. Nevertheless, numerous reforms must be made for the future welfare of the company if the management does not want to face similar serious disputes again.

After a long absence which because of her quality is impossible to understand, Yvette Chauviré made a brilliant return in *Les Mirages* on March 26. In the full richness of her art this *prima ballerina assoluta* knows how to combine the most pure emotion with her expressive technique. The warmth of the reception she received was only her due — in justice to her delicate perfection. And soon the Muscovites will be able to appreciate the brightest jewel of this company.

M. Georges Hirsch has announced two appointments. That of Lucien Duthoit, a *grand sujet,* to *premier danseur,* a promotion both well-deserved and timely. However, the other appointment — that of Josette Amiel to *première danseuse* — seems more debateable, especially when the Opéra so recently banished from its stage first Nina Vyroubova and then Yvette Chauviré, and at a time when it is already embellished by the promising brilliance of Claire Motte.

INTERNATIONAL BALLET OF THE MARQUIS DE CUEVAS

UNDER its new title the Company began its season at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées on April 21.

Despite the tentative injunction, awkwardly brought by the Opéra, *Noir et Blanc* (a version of *Suite en Blanc,* produced at Monte Carlo in 1946) was presented. It was a very marked success and it enabled the full talents of the company to be judged. Such comparisons can only serve ballet well. While Rosella Hightower in the *variation* "La Flute" and Serge Golovine displayed a real mastery, Nina Vyroubova showed that she is still the best interpreter of the *variation* "La Cigarette". In the *pas de deux* Jacqueline Moreau remained faithful to the tradition of the Opéra.

In addition to the new works featured elsewhere in this number there were numerous revivals. These included William Dollar's *Constantia,* with Génia Melikova and Serge Golovine, and *The Prisoner of the Caucasus,* in which young George Goviloff showed himself to be a new star. *Diagramme,* by Janine Charrat to Bach's 6th Brandenburg Concerto, has not worn well, although it was much praised last year. This year it appeared too light and uncertain, but production is at fault to the point of almost destroying a disciplined work which must be overhauled.

In Balanchine's *Night Shadow,* Nina Vyroubova gave a thrilling characterisation. Deeply romantic and immaterial, she gave one the impression of a floating and weightless cloud, as she glided backwards and forwards across the stage in small *pas de bourrée.* Although she adopts expressionless features for this rôle she is still touching and she conveys an extreme sense of tension. Serge Golovine brought to the rôle of the Poet a most unexpected sensitivity.

Rosella Hightower is still the ideal artist for John Taras's masterpiece, *Piège de Lumière.* The rôle of the imposing blue butterfly remains one of her best, and it allows her to display her talents to the full. Unfortunately the absence of Vladimir Skouratoff, who was excellent in this work, had deplorable results, for Nicholas Polajenko was of little use in his rôle. This may also be said of Wassil Tupin, who replaced Serge Golovine.

Giselle gave Vyroubova another opportunity to prove that she is still one of this major rôle's best interpreters. She is charming and spontaneous in the first act and light and ethereal in the second. Only rarely is such a fine balance between expressive technique and innate poetry achieved. Serge Golovine, formerly renowned for his technique, especially his elevation, has greatly improved his acting ability. Finally, Génia Melikova was a brilliant and splendidly authoritative Queen of the Wilis.

Various *pas de deux* complete the repertoire. We must single out *Le Cygne Noir,* which was performed as usual by Hightower; Lifar's *Duetto* for Vyroubova and Golovine containing interesting *adages* which, contrary to the general practice, conceal real difficulties; and finally *La Esmeralda,* in which Génia Melikova made an impression.

The most spectacular work was the *Adage de la fée des roses,* the *grand pas d'action* from *The Sleeping Beauty* taken out of its context and expanded. Here we must praise the excellent presentation of the dancers, Jean Robier's costumes, and Hightower's inexhaustible *brio,* but a *brio* which sometimes reaches the limits of acrobatic brilliance.

Marie-Françoise Christout.

What YOU Think

Letters to the Editor should be as short as possible

UNFAIR TO CRANKO

SIR: I am surprised at the reaction of *Dance and Dancers* to my supposed remarks published recently in the popular press (reprinted in the May issue of *Dance and Dancers* on page 22). Both Clive Barnes and Peter Williams know me very well personally, and surely would have guessed from the tone of the whole article that unless I had taken complete leave of my senses, I should never have made statements of that kind. The *Dancing Times* recently quoted the same "interview", but as I do not know the editors quite so well as yourselves I have answered them fully in a letter which I understand they are publishing in their next issue.

As to my statement about creating masterpieces, it is because I am all too aware that my works are not masterpieces that I used the word at all.

Perhaps next time a malicious article is written about me, the editors of *Dance and Dancers* will give me the benefit of the doubt and contact me personally to find out what I did say before quoting me indirectly in their usually very sensible and just columns. JOHN CRANKO, Via Pontaccio 2, Milan.

happy birthday to...

		June
Doreen Wells	Royal Ballet	25
Celia Franca	Canadian National Ballet	25
Norman Dixon	Ballet Rambert	26
Maria Verdino	De Cuevas International Ballet	26
Christopher Newton	Royal Ballet	26
Brian Shaw	Royal Ballet	28
Henning Kronstam	Royal Danish Ballet	29
Valerie Taylor	Royal Ballet	30
		July
Leslie Caron		1
Jean Doussard	De Cuevas International Ballet	1
Robert Ito	Canadian National Ballet	2
Simon Mottram	Royal Ballet	3
Beverly Sims	American Ballet Theatre	4
John Hart	Royal Ballet	4
Leo Duggan	American Ballet Theatre	5
Katerina Evanova	Canadian National Ballet	10
Hazel Coward	London's Festival Ballet	13
Fredda Maurice	American Ballet Theatre	13
Brenda Bolton	Royal Ballet	14
Anita Landa	London's Festival Ballet	14
Royes Fernandez	American Ballet Theatre	15
Joanne Nisbet	London's Festival Ballet	15
Patricia Wilde	New York City Ballet	16
Penelope Winter	Canadian National Ballet	17
Maria de Carbone	De Cuevas International Ballet	17
Joan Cadzow	Dancing in Paris	17
Daphne Dale	De Cuevas International Ballet	18
Anne Negus	Teaching in England	21
Angela Bayley	Teaching in Holland	22
Julia Farron	Royal Ballet	22
Jennifer Gay	Royal Ballet	22

COVER STORIES

This month's front cover, by Houston Rogers, is of Brian Shaw and Nadia Nerina in the revival of Frederick Ashton's distinguished ballet, Scènes de Ballet, **which has been given by the Royal Ballet during its present Covent Garden season.**

BRIAN SHAW was born at Golcar, in Yorkshire, in 1928. He first studied with Mary Shaw in Huddersfield and later, in London, with Ruth French and at the Sadler's Wells School. He first appeared in the ballet from the opera, *The Bartered Bride,* at the Sadler's Wells Theatre. In 1944, he joined the Sadler's Wells Ballet and, at an early age, started to take over important rôles. It was as one of the three male dancers in Ashton's *Symphonic Variations,* a rôle he created, that he leapt to fame. His progress was cut short in 1946 when he joined H.M. Forces. On his return to the company he achieved international fame when the Sadler's Wells Ballet first went to America. With the Royal Ballet he has taken over many important rôles and has had numerous rôles created for him.

NADIA NERINA was born in Cape Town in 1927. She first studied with Hazel Grinter and Joyce Smerdon there, and later with Mary Skeaping. She gained many awards in South Africa and toured the Union of South Africa before coming to England in 1946 to study at the Sadler's Wells School. In the same year she joined the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet and her first created rôle with the company was as a Circus Dancer in Howard's *Mardi Gras.* With the company she created a number of new rôles and danced the principal classical rôles. In 1947 she was promoted to the company at Covent Garden. Her rise to ballerina status has been rapid and today she ranks next to Margot Fonteyn. She has danced all the principal rôles in the full-length classical ballets as well as having created many new ones.

Ballet Dates

THE ROYAL BALLET
at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

May
20 *Ballet Imperial, The Rake's Progress, Petrushka*
22 *Les Sylphides, The Firebird, Coppélia,* Act 3
23 *Solitaire, Giselle* (Fonteyn, Somes)
26 The Royal Ballet opens a season of one week at the International Exhibition in Brussels.

June
3 *Les Sylphides, Miracle in the Gorbals, Birthday Offering*
5 *Solitaire, Coppélia* (Park, Burne)
6 *Ballet Imperial, Giselle* (Fonteyn, Somes)
7 **(M)** *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Linden, Ashbridge)
7 **(E)** *Les Patineurs, Giselle* (Beriosova, Chatfield)
10 Centenary Gala Performance
11 *Les Patineurs, Birthday Offering, Petrushka*
13 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Beriosova, Chatfield)
18 *The Sleeping Beauty* (Fonteyn, Somes)
21 **(M)** *The Sleeping Beauty* (Jackson, Chatfield)
21 **(E)** *The Sleeping Beauty* (Nerina, Blair)

THE ROYAL BALLET
(formerly Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet)

May
19 The Grand Theatre Blackpool
26 The Alhambra Theatre, Bradford

June
2 The Theatre Royal, Newcastle
9 The Embassy Theatre, Peterborough
25 The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.
25 *Veneziana, Les Sylphides, The Burrow, Pineapple Poll*
27 *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Linden, Ashbridge)
28 *A Blue Rose, Bluebird* pas de deux, *Le Lac des Cygnes* (Act 2), *Veneziana*

July
3 *Les Sylphides, The Burrow, A Blue Rose, Pineapple Poll*
7 The Opera House, Cheltenham (Festival)

FESTIVAL BALLET

May
24-27 Théâtre de l'Opéra, Marseilles

June
2-14 Israel
17-22 Staatstheater, Zurich
24-29 Deutsches Theater, Munich

July
7, 8 Théâtre de l'Opéra, Paris
11-13 Festival of Nervi, Genoa
17-Sept. 13. The Royal Festival Hall, London

BALLET RAMBERT

May 27-July 15 Glyndebourne Festival
22 The Baalbeck Festival, The Lebanon
31 The King's Lynn Festival, Norfolk

Sept.
8 The Sadler's Wells Theatre, London (two weeks)

WESTERN THEATRE BALLET

June **2** Palace Theatre, Reading
19 Theatre Royal, Bristol
26 Dartington Hall, Totnes

XIMENEZ-VARGAS SPANISH BALLET
at the Sadler's Wells, Theatre, London, June 16 for three weeks

SUNDAY BALLET CLUB
at Wyndham's Theatre, on June 8

BALLET IN LONDON PARKS
in Waterlow Park, Highgate Hill

9-11 The Hilde Holger Modern Ballet
30-July 2 Ballets Minerva.

Streatham Common, Streatham

June
12-14 The Hilde Holger Modern Ballet.

July
3-5 Ballet Minerva.

EUROPEAN FESTIVALS

The following festivals have announced that they will present dance and ballet programmes. Full details will be given at the earliest possible date.

WIESBADEN—May 24-26, American Ballet Theatre; May 31, The State Opera Ballet of Belgrade in *The Devil in the Village* and in operas *Prince Igor* and *Katja Kabanova* on May 30 and June 1.

BORDEAUX—May 13-15, The Paris Opéra Ballet; May 25, Coros Y Danzas of Spain.

COPENHAGEN Royal Danish Ballet Festival—May 17, *Romeo and Juliet*; May 18, *Harlequinade, Coppélia*; May 20, *Romeo and Juliet*; May 21, *La Ventana, Pas de Quatres Coppélia*; May 22, *The Whims of Cupid and the Maître de Ballet, Moonreindeer, Fanfare*; May 23, *Serenade, Pas de deux* from the *Floral Fête at Genzano, Apollon Musagetes, The Whims of Cupid and the Maître de Ballet*; May 24, *La Sylphide, Harlequinade*; May 27, *Les Sylphides, Night Sradow, Symphony in C*; May 29, *La Sylphide, Graduation Ball*; May 30, *Coppélia, Kermesse at Bruges*; May 31, *Les Sylphides, Moonreindeer, Fanfare*;

BRUSSELS—Festival Mondial 1958.
At the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie : May 26-June 1, The Royal Ballet. June 22-July 13, The Bolshoi Theatre Ballet of Moscow. July 22, The Netherlands Ballet.
At the Palais des Beaux—Arts : May 27-June 2, Coros Y Danzas of Spain. June 6-12, Mazowsze from Poland. July 1-24, Changwe Yetu from the Belgian Congo. July 28, Antonio Spanish Ballet. Aug. 2-6, Ukrainian Song and Dance Ensemble. Aug. 11-Sept. 6, The Moiseyev Ensemble from Moscow. Sept. 18-23, Hungarian Dance Group.
At the American Pavilion Theatre : July 2-4, American National Ballet Theatre. July -5-20, Jerome Robbins Ballet. Aug. 5-10, American National Ballet Theatre.

BATH—May 29-June 7. Soloists of the Royal Danish Ballet.

BERGEN (Norway)—May 30-June 15

ZURICH—June 17-23, London's Festival Ballet in *The Nutcracker* and other ballets.

STOCKHOLM—The Swedish Royal Ballet, May 31, *Swan Lake.* June 2, *Coppélia, Gala Performance.* June 4, *The Linden, On Stage!, Minortauros.* June **10**, *The Sleeping Beauty.* June 13, Various Ballets.

SPOLETO—Festival of Two Worlds : June 7, 8, 13, 14, 18, 22, 27, 28, 29, The Jerome Robbins Ballet in the Teatro Nuovo. June 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 7, 22, 27, 28, 29, The John Butler Chamber Ballet in Teatro Caio Melisso.

HOLLAND (Amsterdam, The Hague)—June 15-July 15. Foreign and Dutch Ballet companies.

GRANADA—June 24, 25 Falla's *La Vida Breve* and *The Three-Cornered Hat* with Victorio de los Angeles and Antonio's Spanish Ballet. June 27-29, The Paris Opéra Ballet. July 3, 4, Antonio's Spanish Ballet.

DUBROVNIK—July 1-Aug. 31. The Belgrade Opera Ballet in *The Devil in the Village, Giselle, El Amor Brujo, La Reine des Iles* (middle of August). Ensemble of Serbian Folk Dancers (end of July). Ensemble of Croatian Folk Dancers (beginning of August). Ensemble of Macedonian Folk Dancers (end of August).

GENOA—The 4th Festival of Nervi. July 1-3, Grand Divertissement in honour of Cecchetti and Bournonville with a group from the Royal Ballet (including Svetlana Beriosova and David Blair), a group of soloists from the Royal Danish Ballet and a group from France organised by Serge Lifar. July 5, 6, Ballet from the Vienna Opera with a new creation. July 11-13, London's Festival Ballet with a creation by Paddy Stone. July 8-10, Dance Films of all Nations.

BREGENZ (Austria): July 18-August 17, The Vienna State Opera Ballet in *Sylvia* and in the opera, *The Bartered Bride* by the lake. Ballet evenings in the Guildhall including *The Nutcracker Suite* and *Hotel Sacher.*

SANTANDER — July 25-August 31. Antonio's Spanish Ballet. American Ballet Theatre. Mariemma's Spanish Ballet. Coros Y Danzas of Spain.

ATHENS—August 1-September 15.

EDINBURGH—August 24-September 13. Ballet Premières at the Empire Theatre; Aug. 25-Sept. 13.

A complete programme will be published next month.

NOTE : all these programmes are as complete as possible at the time of going to press. Please check with Travel Agents before buying tickets.

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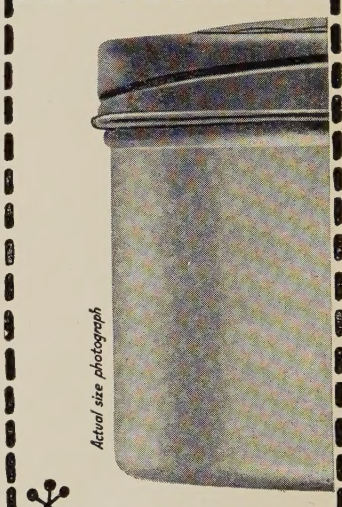

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